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OF

CONGREGATIONALISM

From the Apostolic Age to the Present Times.

PART I.

LONDON :

CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES,
MEMORIAL HALL, FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.

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HISTORY OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

THIS HISTORY will show that Congregationalism can give a good account of itself. It represents a cause that the best and bravest of men have struggled for and gloried in. It has inscribed a noble record on the pages of our country's history. It claims recognition as a potent factor, during the past 300 years, in the great struggle for civil and religious freedom.

I.

FROM APOSTOLIC TIMES TO THE REFORMATION.

CONGREGATIONALISM APOSTOLIC.

In tracing the origin and history of Congregationalism we must begin with apostolic times ; for it is as old as Christianity. It is, indeed, the body and form in which Christianity first enshrined itself, for the Churches which the apostles planted were undoubtedly Congregational. This fact has been acknowledged by eminent Episcopalians of our own, as well as former, times. Such testimonies are too numerous to be quoted here.

Dr. John Cunningham, in his recently published lectures on "The Growth of the Church in its Organization and Institutions," says :—"Thus the first form of the Church was Congregational, for every member took a part in its management, and every congregation was independent of every other, and was a complete Church in itself—the marks of Congregationalism at the present day." Dr. Cunningham is a Presbyterian ; it is, therefore, no small compliment to Congregationalism when he further says :—"The first form of Presbyterianism was Congregational." If this is the truth concerning Congregationalism, then the chief plea that can be urged in favour of Episcopalianism and Presbyterianism is that of expediency and policy.

As a witness for Congregational Independency, Gibbon, in his "Decline and Fall," may be appealed to. He says, "Independence and equality formed the basis of the internal constitution of the primitive churches in the Roman Empire." It was only as Christianity became entangled with formality and worldliness that the congregational simplicity of the primitive churches was subverted. Novatian, in the third century, strove to arrest the downward tendencies of ritualised Christianity; and he and his followers were nicknamed Puritans, because they sought to bring back Christianity to the original simplicity of apostolic Congregationalism. The Puritanism of Novatian was the type and pattern of that which arose in our own country to protest against the rehabilitated Romanism of the so-called Reformation. After Novatian came Aerius, presbyter of Sebastia, who flourished about 385. He maintained that there should be but one order of the clergy, the Bishop or Pastor. He was the leader of a party essentially Congregational. He and his party bravely protested against the episcopal system which Constantine the Great set up as the religion of the Roman Empire. Traces of congregational dissent from the episcopal power and system may be found in every age, from the fourth century to the present day.

THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCHES CONGREGATIONAL.

Christianity was introduced into Britain in the first century of the Christian era. It was of a much simpler and purer type of polity and worship than that by which Augustine, the Missionary Monk of Pope Gregory, sought, in 596, to supplant it. Those early Christians of ancient Britain resolutely refused to comply with, or to be absorbed in, the gorgeously ritualistic and absurdly superstitious system of Augustine and Pope Gregory. In order to punish such obstinately unyielding followers of Christ, the murderous forces of persecution were set in motion against them, so that they were ultimately either exterminated or driven to the mountains of Wales and North Britain. The polity and doctrines of those early Christian Churches of our country were, in many respects, strikingly similar to the polity and doctrines which Congregationalism has ever maintained. Some years before the advent of Pope Gregory's missionary, as Bishop Stillingfleet has shown, a council of the British Churches was held in Wales, consisting of 118 bishops. Now the fact that there were in Britain, at

that time, 118 bishops, when the entire number of inhabitants could not exceed three or four millions, is a sufficient proof of the flourishing condition of early British Christianity, as well as of the fact that the polity of those early churches was much superior to that Diocesan Episcopacy by which they were supplanted. It is tolerably certain that nearly every pastor of a distinct Church was called a Bishop. This designation and this method of Church order and government accord most exactly with the plan and practice of the Churches mentioned in the New Testament. This, too, is the polity which we, as Congregational Independents, have adopted, maintained and practised; for we believe that every pastor of a Christian Church, is, according to the teaching of the New Testament, a bishop.

WICKLIFFE'S CONGREGATIONALISM.

The traditions of the early British churches survived their extermination. Although the Episcopal Church of Rome succeeded in establishing itself, it was never as thoroughly Roman as the Popes wished it to be. Both princes and people often showed their dislike of the foreign yoke. When Wickliffe arose, in the fourteenth century, to protest against the errors, usurpations, and iniquities of the Church of Rome, he did but revive and represent the principles of those earlier Protestants, a faithful remnant of whom were probably still scattered over the country. He was their eloquent spokesman. He echoed the feelings and faith of those humble followers of Jesus. Wickliffe advocated most of the essential doctrines of the Congregational polity. The sufficiency of the Scriptures, the constitution of the church of visible saints, the liberty of the form of worship, the self-managing power of the Church, and the two orders of officers, were the prime articles of his ecclesiastical creed.

THE EARLY PROTESTANTS CONGREGATIONAL.

There were others—such as the Culdees, the Albigenses, the Waldenses and others, all anterior to Luther's Reformation—who maintained a purer form of worship, and a polity more or less congregational. Before the Protestant Reformers had entered into political alliances with states, their ecclesiastical polity was congregational. But the more they became

entangled with secular alliances, the more confused and complicated were their statements as to the nature of a Christian Church. In one of the earliest of Luther's writings, entitled "Causes and Reasons, deduced from the Scriptures, why a Christian congregation have the right and power to judge over, to call, to appoint, and to remove their teachers," he asserts the independence of the separate church in the strongest and most unqualified terms. The early Protestants of France, notwithstanding Calvin's Presbyterianism and State-Churchism, were largely Congregational as to their views and practice in the matter of Church government. A treatise was published by Morellius in 1562, in which he advocated Congregational principles. The book was condemned by Synod held at Orleans in the same year, and, at the instance of Calvin, the author was banished from Geneva, not to return to the city on pain of death. Great and good man as he was, Calvin could never tolerate any difference of opinion from his own. He was too rigid a Presbyterian to permit a Congregationalist to enjoy the blessing of freedom in the same city with himself. The first Huguenot churches were constituted and managed on Congregational principles. In all the struggles for freedom and for reformation, from the earliest times of Christianity, Congregational principles have been influential and prominent.

II.

FROM THE REFORMATION TO THE COMMON-WEALTH.

It is interesting and instructive to trace the evolution and working of Congregational principles amid the mighty and manifold conflicts of the Protestant Reformation in England. Very few of the Reformers had, at first, any clear and definite conception of Congregational principles. The views of men who had been reared in Popery were, at first, almost as hazy as the views of him who saw men as trees walking, on the nature and rights of Christian Churches.

HENRY VIII. AND THE REFORMATION.

Our historians tell us that we owe the Protestant Reformation to Henry VIII. It is tolerably certain, however, that, if Wycliffe and his noble band of itinerant preachers—the heroic

Lollards that followed him—had not previously sown broadcast throughout the country the seeds of Gospel truth, that burly and blustering monarch would have done very little reformation work. What he did was intended more to gratify his pride and his passion than to promote the cause of Protestantism. It is quite certain that he hated Luther as well as Luther's work as long as he lived. He wrote a stupid book to refute Luther's teachings, for which the Pope conferred on him the sublime title of "Defender of the Faith." But six years had not elapsed when Henry, unfaithful to the Pope, separated with his kingdom from the Holy See, retaining, however, for himself and for his successors the Pope-given title of "Defender of the Faith." Henry was enraged that the Pope should dare to thwart his amorous purpose, so he determined that he would be a match for the Pope by becoming a Pope himself. Then the Pope of Rome excommunicated, by way of reprisal, the self-made Pope of England. But Henry never accepted the Protestantism of Luther.

The German Reformation, however, had many friends and partisans in England. The majority of them were much disappointed to find their hopes of reformation frustrated; for they saw very little difference between Roman Catholics and English Episcopalians. They saw that Henry maintained nearly all the doctrinal errors of the Church of Rome, such as transubstantiation, clerical celibacy, auricular confession, purgatory, and prayers for the dead; and whilst, by Henry's orders, Papists were hanged for denying the royal supremacy, Protestants were burnt for denying the Papal doctrines. There was one gleam of Congregational and Protestant principle, however, in one saying of the King; for when assured that Tyndale's Bible contained no heresies, he said: "Then in God's name let it go abroad among my people." That saying was the first step to Congregational Protestantism.

EDWARD VI. THE REAL REFORMER.

Henry VIII. was succeeded by his son Edward VI. Though he was very young, he was an excellent and pious prince. The Reformation was greatly promoted by him, and the position of Protestantism became much improved during his reign. Archbishop Cranmer had great influence over the young monarch, and he used his influence for the advancement of Protestantism and evangelical religion. He endeavoured to

settle the Reformation on a Scriptural basis by correcting and reprinting the English Bible, and causing it to be read in Churches. It is worthy of note that in Cranmer's Bible the word "ecclesia," which is now translated "church," is uniformly rendered "congregation." Thus, this great Bishop and Protestant martyr was so far a Congregationalist. It would have been advantageous to Christian simplicity and truth if King James had allowed it to remain in that translation of the Bible which he sanctioned. Not only was the Bible given to the people, but a Book of Common Prayer was compiled in English, and Forty-two Articles of Religion were drawn up and published by Royal authority. While these were intended to sweep away many of the doctrinal errors that Henry VIII. retained, they enjoined some ceremonies that were obnoxious to very many conscientious and godly men. Bishop Hooper particularly objected to the vestments prescribed as necessary to be worn, because they were the vestments of Popery. For refusing to be consecrated in such vestments he was thrown into prison, and nearly lost his life. They were represented by some as *indifferent*, but he said, with almost prophetic perception, "If they be kept as things indifferent, at length they will be maintained as things necessary." The vestments were deemed a significant symbol, like the colours of a regiment. As Hooper and many others of the clergy considered them nothing less than the livery of the Pope, they refused to wear them in conducting the worship of God. While many were thus throwing off the bondage and the badges of Popery, many were also thinking and feeling in the direction of Congregationalism. John Alasco, a Polish nobleman, gathered a church of German refugees in London, about 1550, and advocated most of the doctrines of Congregationalism. He proceeded, under the great seal of King Edward, "out of his great desire to settle a like reformation in the English churches." But the death of Edward arrested all such efforts.

THE MARIAN PERSECUTION

Then Mary came to the throne, in 1553, who began at once to undo all that her brother had done, by the savage use of faggot and fire, earning for herself the infamous title of "Bloody Mary." She restored popish doctrines, ceremonies, and worship. She prohibited the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of the Gospel. She persecuted with the utmost

severity all who refused to conform to the Romish church and to acknowledge the authority of the Pope of Rome. Great numbers fled to Germany and Switzerland, where the reformation flourished. Many remained at home to be witnesses for the truth at the stake. Among those who were burnt were Archbishop Cranmer and Bishops Latimer, Ridley, Farrar, and Hooper. Some 400 persons were thus burnt in the sight of the people; but a much larger number perished in prison. Yet many escaped, for some historians tell us that "there were many Congregational Churches meeting secretly." In 1554, the English exiles, with Mr. Whittingham, went to Frankfort and established their church, July 29th, on Congregational principles, making the church the *dernier ressort* in all controversies, choosing their own ministers and deacons and rejecting the superstitions in the service book of Edward VI. Even amid such fiery trial as the Marian persecution, Congregational principles won adherents both at home and abroad.

ELIZABETH AND NONCONFORMITY.

Elizabeth succeeded Mary, her sister, in the year 1558. She re-established the Reformation and the Episcopacy, with herself as its sovereign head. Although Elizabeth was probably more Protestant than her father, yet she, even, had in her the spirit of a Pope. She at once set herself to the task of bringing about, as Macaulay says, a *compromise* between Protestantism and Catholicism. By this means she hoped to make it possible for Catholics to remain in the Reformed Church of England. But in enforcing this compromise she came into collision with the most earnest and godly among her people—those who had thrown off the yoke of Rome; those who had become thorough Protestants. Many of these good people—especially the leaders among them—had fled to the Continent during the Marian persecution, but on the accession of Elizabeth to the throne of England they returned to their native land, most irretrievably indoctrinated with the most thorough-going Protestantism. Elizabeth, however, was determined to establish this church of compromise, so she got her Parliament to adopt the Prayer Book—a book which Milton calls "an extract of the Mass Book"—and to pass an Act of Uniformity, requiring all clergymen to use it or be deprived of their livings. This Act of Uniformity is one of the great landmarks of the religious history of England. Up

to this time it had been the special aim and endeavour of our worldly-wise church-makers to make all people *think* alike ; for the great crime was heresy. Now, however, our Queen-swayed law-makers devise a Parliamentary power by which to make all people *pray* alike, or *conform* to one way of worship ; for henceforth the great crime is *Nonconformity*.

Did this despotic measure succeed? Not quite. Some Protestants of the Puritan type *did* conform ; but they always seemed ill at ease in their conformity. The great majority of Protestant Puritans became henceforth Nonconformists. Some were Presbyterians ; some were Baptists ; some were Congregational Independents.

X ROBERT BROWNE AND CONGREGATIONAL INDEPENDENCY.

The most distinguished leader of the Independents was the Rev. Robert Browne. He had been reared in the Established Church and was connected with a wealthy and noble family. He not only attacked the system of the Church of England, but he protested against the attempt to set up any general church, whether ruled by Prelates or Presbyteries. He maintained that each separate society of Christians, whether large or little, formed a complete church in itself. Those who thought with him, therefore, simply formed themselves into separate congregations, each managing its own affairs, whence they came, a little later, to be known by the noble and historic name of Congregational Independents. They were sometimes called *Separatists* because they contended for the separation of the Church from the world. They were also called *Brownists*, after their leader. Browne said, "The kingdom of God was not to be begun by whole parishes, but rather of the worthiest, be they never so few."

After preaching in various parts of the country with great effect, he sought to realize his ideal by joining with his friend, the Rev. Robert Harrison, and others, to form a Congregational Church in the City of Norwich in 1580.

Browne and his colleague held and taught that Christ is the head of the Church and rules it by His Word and His Spirit ; that a true Church is constituted only of godly and believing persons, who associate themselves by voluntary covenant with God and with each other, promising to submit to His government ; that each local church is competent, under Christ, to regulate its affairs, and is independent of all control but His ;

that its ordinary officers are a pastor, a teacher of doctrine, elders and deacons ; that its officers are chosen by the voice of its members, who also have oversight of one another for the spiritual advancement of the whole ; that its relation to the other churches is one of brotherly love and mutual helpfulness ; that the magistrates have no ecclesiastical authority at all, but only as any other Christians, if so be they be Christians.

Although Browne afterwards, under the tremendous pressure of lordly and high-placed friends, submitted to Episcopal authority, and accepted a living in Northamptonshire, he did not give much satisfaction to them, for he still endeavoured to separate godly people from the world and form them into a church within the Church. As Dr. Dexter says, "Robert Browne is entitled to the proud pre-eminence of having been the first writer clearly to state and defend in the English tongue the true and now accepted doctrine of the relation of the magistrate to the Church," for he denounced as anti-Christian a national Church governed by an episcopal hierarchy and the civil magistracy. Although he conformed, the principles which he had drawn from the New Testament and proclaimed to the world were not impaired by his recreant retirement ; for bolder advocates and more faithful witnesses came forward, counting not their lives dear unto them, if by any self-sacrifice they might uplift the standard of truth and advance the cause of God. The Standard was more firmly grasped by many of his followers, not a few of whom became martyrs for the truth. Foremost among those confessors and martyrs were Henry Barrowe, John Greenwood, Roger Rippon, Francis Johnson, and John Penry, the Welsh Evangelist.

THE "PRIMARY CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH" IN ENGLAND.

But Congregational Separatists were to be found wherever the New Testament was read. There were thousands of godly men and women all over the United Kingdom who, having begun to read and study the New Testament Scriptures for themselves, as translated by Cranmer, with "Congregation" instead of "Church," had grasped those leading principles of Congregationalism which lay so plainly on the very surface of the Acts of the Apostles and the Pauline Epistles. It required the priestly genius of a Pope and the logical subtlety of a Calvin to find the complicated schemes of Prelaticalism and Presbyterianism in the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Congregationalism was not invented by this or that great scholar ; but plain people found it in the Christian Scriptures, just as they found the Gospel of Salvation. This fact accounts for the uprising and gathering, about this time, of congregations of Christian Separatists in nearly every county of Great Britain. One such Church—some say that it was the first Congregational Church in England—existed somewhere in London about 1571, Richard Fitz being the minister and Thomas Rowland the deacon. The following declaration from the pen of this devoted minister is well worthy of being quoted here :—

“The True Marks of Christes Church, &c.

“The order of the Privye Church in London, whiche by the malice of Satan is falselie slaundred and evell spoken of.

“The myndes of them, that by the strengthe and workinge of the Almighty, our Lorde Jesus Christe, have set their hands and hartes to the pure, unmingled, and sincere worshippinge of God, according to His blessed and glorious worde in al things, onely abolishing and abhorringe all tradicions and inventions of man whatsoever, in the same religion and service of our Lord God, knowing this always, that the trew and afflicted Church of our Lorde and Savyoure Jesus Christe, eyther hathe, or else ever more continually under the crosse stryveth for to have :

“Firste and Foremoste, the glorious worde and Evangele preached, not in bondage and subjection, but freely and purelye.

“Secondly, to have the sacraments mynistered purely onely, and all together accordinge to the institution and good worde of the Lord Jesus, without any tradicion or invention of man ; and last of all to have, not the fylthye Cannon law, but disseplyne onely, and all together agreeable to the same heavenly and allmighty worde of our good Lorde Jesus Christe.

“Richard Fytz, Minister.”

This is the first document known to be in existence, in connection with the history of English Congregationalism. Both the Minister and the deacon of this primary Congregational Church of the English Reformation died in prison. They abhorred the Canon Law of the Established Church as “this secret and disguised Antechrist.” Their great aim was to “bring home the people of God to the purity and truth of the Apostolic Church” by “giving them the Book of the Lord.”

THE STAR CHAMBER AND PURITANISM.

Elizabeth and her Bishops sought to crush Congregational and Puritan Protestants by setting in motion the persecuting

machinery of the Star Chamber against them ; still their cause kept making way. It made way until Sir Walter Raleigh could declare in Parliament that there were twenty thousand Separatists in Norfolk, Essex and the neighbourhood of London. It made way until there came into Parliament petition after petition praying for a reform of ecclesiastical abuses. It made way until in 1584 a bill was introduced into the Commons proposing to appoint an eldership in each parish, together with the minister, to determine the spiritual business of the parish. The Queen, however, ordered both bill and petition out of the House, and roughly told the Commons that "she was settled in her religion and would not begin again." The members who had spoken for the bill were sent to the Tower ; the clergy who attempted such reforms were fined, suspended, and imprisoned ; even the printers of such dangerous documents, when caught, had their presses broken and their hands cut off. But notwithstanding these cruelly repressive measures, Congregational and Puritan Nonconformity rapidly increased.

Elizabeth's efforts to crush the Nonconformists were, after a while, checked by the fear of a foreign invasion. Philip II., of Spain, had long threatened to crush the Protestantism of England, and at length the "Invincible Armada" appeared in the Channel. The news aroused all England. For the moment the English people forgot their differences and rallied round their Protestant Queen. By the fire-ships of Drake and the bravery of British seamen, aided by the winds of heaven, the great fleet was scattered and destroyed, in 1588, and few of those who set out from Spain returned to tell the tale of their defeat. "The Lord sent His wind and scattered them." Every Protestant, Nonconformist as well as Conformist, was now filled with rejoicing and thankfulness. The Queen went in state to St. Paul's Cathedral to thank God for the glorious victory. All this was good and right ; but how little pity was felt for the hundreds of poor Nonconformists who, at that very time, were slowly wearing out their lives in prison because of their hatred of Popery and their loyalty to Christ ! Among those sufferers for conscience sake were some of the best, the holiest, and the most learned men of that time. It was under this most Protestant sovereign that the most persecuting laws against nonconforming Protestants were enacted.

But the persecuting policy pursued by Elizabeth against the Nonconforming Puritans proved an utter failure ; for at the end of her long reign—in spite of fines and imprisonments,

gibbets and gallows—their numbers had largely increased, their influence had widely spread, and their opposition, not only to the ceremonies but to the whole government of the church, had become more decided and determined. Notwithstanding all that Mr. Gladstone has so eloquently said, in the *Nineteenth Century Magazine*, of the glory and greatness of Elizabeth's reign, her treatment of Nonconforming Protestants will for ever remain on the page of history to mar the memorial of that glory and spoil the splendour of that greatness.

JAMES THE FIRST AND CONGREGATIONAL NONCONFORMITY.

After Elizabeth's death came King James of Scotland, in 1603, from whom better things were at first hoped ; but James proved to be a great disappointment. In some respects he was worse than Elizabeth, as he enforced her worst laws in a worse spirit. Persecuting the Nonconforming Puritans and Congregational Separatists with the most spiteful severity, he said, "I will make them conform, or I will harry them out of the land." Well, he did harry a good many of them out of the country. And what became of them ? Some found a refuge in Holland and other Protestant lands ; but the majority of them went across the seas to found, on the great American continent, the most magnificent nation on the face of the earth. James might even at that time have been warned by the senseless policy of France, who had harried the Huguenots out of her country, and was then, as ever since, poorer and weaker for that act of bigotry, cruelty, and injustice ; for France expelled her best blood and brain when she banished the brave, industrious and godly Huguenots.

During the reign and under the persecution of James the principles of Congregationalism began to be better understood by all sections of Puritans and Separatists. Many conforming Puritans joined the ranks of nonconforming Puritans, and these latter found welcome fellowship among Congregationalists. The more extreme Separatists, merging some points of difference, cordially coalesced with Congregationalist Separatists. The Baptist section of Congregationalism, however, elected to maintain a separatist attitude in reference to all Pædo-Baptists, whether conforming or nonconforming. Presbyterianism had as yet but a scanty following, but was showing life and power and was increasing in numbers.

Many Congregational churches were formed, about this time,

in the metropolis and in the provinces. In and around London, Christian people of stern resolution and martyr-like daring gathered in private houses, gardens, woods, gravel-pits, brickfields, workshops, ships, and even prisons, and there they worshipped God according to His Word and the dictates of their consciences. In the provinces, John Smyth, Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge, organised a congregational church at Gainsborough in 1602. Soon another church of the same faith and order was formed at Scrooby. It was, for a time, under the pastoral care of Richard Clyfton, a minister who, in loyalty to conscience, had relinquished his living at Worksop. On the retirement of Clyfton to Holland, John Robinson, M.A., was called to take pastoral charge of that church, which met in the house of William Brewster at Scrooby. He had only recently left the Puritan party of Conformists and joined the ranks of Congregational Separatists. But he, and his church, were not long left in peaceful enjoyment of their fellowship at Scrooby. As Sir Dudley Carleton says, in a letter dated February 20th, 1605, "The poor ministers have been ferretted out in all corners;" the Scrooby church and its pastor did not escape the ferrets of the persecuting prelates. "Some were taken," as Bradford tells us, "and clapped up in prison; others had their houses beset night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to fly, and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood."

"HARRIED OUT OF THE LAND."

"Seeing themselves thus molested and that there was no hope of their continuance there, by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low Countries, where, they heard, was freedom of religion for all men, as also how sundry from London and other parts of the land, that had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause were gone thither, and lived in Amsterdam and in other places of the land." After the most formidable difficulties and perils, both on land and on sea, they arrived at Amsterdam. The training of the pilgrims during their sojourn in Holland prepared them for the service to which they were destined as the pioneer Christian settlement of America. During twelve years they were obliged, from the necessities of their position, to learn and practise many mechanical arts. The religious and moral instruction they received from

Robinson prepared them to fulfil their mutual and relative obligations, in seasons of affliction and peril, on an unknown and desolate shore, and severed from their native land by three thousand miles of stormy sea. They resolved at length to start on their voyage to the New World on the other side of the Atlantic. As many were "willing who could not get ready quickly," it was agreed that their pastor should stay with them, and that "Mr. Brewster should go with the others." Their departure presented a touching scene—a scene which art, poetry, and history have sought to depict; a scene which Congregationalists will never forget; a scene which to-day thrills with undying interest the hearts of two great nations; a scene whose memories of a common origin must ever remain as a bond of union between America and England. Before their departure Mr. Robinson charged them, in words which the Church of Christ will never let die, as "before God and His blessed angels to follow no further than he followed Christ. And if God should reveal anything to them by any other instruments of His, to be as ready to receive it as ever they were to receive any truth by His ministry, for he was very confident the Lord had more truth and light yet to break forth out of his Holy Word." So the Pilgrim Fathers went forth in their little ship *Mayflower*, and after months of perilous tossing on a stormy sea, they reached the lonely harbour of New Plymouth. There in that desolate land the Pilgrim Fathers planted the first successful English colony. There they laid the corner-stone of a mighty nation. There they formed a Christian Church according to the principles of Apostolic Congregationalism. There they made known and practised those Christian principles, the influence and operation of which, in social and national life, have secured the highest blessings of religious freedom to millions of our race.

Among those Congregational exiles were such distinguished saints and scholars as John Robinson, Henry Ainsworth, Francis Johnson, Richard Clyfton, William Brewster, William Bradford, Samuel Fuller, Henry Jacob, with many others of like mind and heart, and purpose and worth.

Mrs. Hemans has beautifully sung of the holy character and purpose of those banished confessors of Congregationalism :—

What sought they thus afar ?

Bright jewels of the mine ?

The wealth of seas, the spoils of war ?

They sought a faith's pure shrine.

Aye, call it holy ground,
 The soil where first they trod ;
 They have left unstained what there they found—
 Freedom to worship God."

CHARLES FOLLOWS HIS FATHER AS A PERSECUTOR.

On the 23rd of April, 1625, the death of James I. terminated an inglorious reign. Charles I. inherited his father's throne, as well as the worst elements of his father's character. Under the influence and direction of that disguised Papist, Archbishop Laud, he followed his father's bad example. He began at once to persecute the Puritans ; but the Roman Catholics were greatly encouraged by his Roman Catholic Queen. It was evident that Charles meant to assimilate the Anglican Church to the Church of Rome. The conforming Puritans had an ill time under Charles and Laud. Henry Burton says, "Neither, I think, can it be shown that, in all Queen Mary's time, there was so great havoc made in so short a time, of the faithful ministers of God in any part of, yea, or in the whole, land. Thus the Puritan party was sorely tried, so they looked for a refuge of peace in a foreign land." Encouraged by the success of the settlement of the Pilgrim Fathers at New Plymouth, they sent out six ships in 1630 to found the colony of Massachusetts ; but John White, the promoter of the enterprise, strongly disclaimed all sympathy with the views of the Congregational Separatists of New Plymouth. Thus the Puritan Fathers of Massachusetts declined all fellowship at first with the Pilgrim Fathers of New Plymouth ; but they afterwards came into closer agreement.

REPUBLICATION OF THE BOOK OF SPORTS.

Among other evil things which Charles did must be mentioned the republication of the abominable "Book of Sports," which he enjoined all the clergy to read in their churches ; and those who refused to recommend profanity and Sabbath-breaking by reading this pernicious "Book of Sports" from their pulpits were turned out of their livings and excommunicated. It was intended, both by James and Charles, to be an instrument for the detection and punishment of Puritan clergymen, and to discredit them with the populace as the enemies of their amusements and recreations. Baxter gives a graphic sketch of the riotous and

rollicking scenes which this "Book of Sports" promoted throughout the agricultural districts of England. He says, "I cannot forget that in my youth in those late times, when we lost the labours of some of our conformable godly teachers, for not reading publicly the 'Book of Sports,' and dancing on the Lord's-Day, one of my father's own tenants was the town piper, hired by the year for many years together, and the place of the dancing assembly was not a hundred yards from our door. And we could not, on the Lord's-Day, either read a chapter, or pray, or sing a Psalm, or catechise and instruct a servant, but with the noise of the pipe and tabor, and the shoutings of the streets continually in our ears. And, even among a tractable people, we were the common scorn of all the rabble in the streets, and called Puritans, precisians, and hypocrites, because we rather chose to read the Scriptures than do as they did, though there was no savour of Nonconformity in our family. And when the people, by the book, were allowed to play and dance out of service time, the reader was fain to stay till the piper and players would give over; and sometimes the morrice dancers would come into the church in all the linen and scarfs and antic dresses, with morrice bells jingling at their legs; and as soon as Common Prayer was read, did haste out presently to their play again." This godless and profane "Book of Sports," however, did more than either Charles or Laud intended; for it drove the most godly of the clergy and of the people into the ranks of Congregational Puritans.

Charles was equally bent on robbing the nation of its *civil* rights. He violated, in various instances, the fundamental principles of Parliament, and exercised an illegal power in civil, as well as ecclesiastical, affairs. These arbitrary proceedings occasioned a civil war among his subjects, a great part of whom joined the Parliament in defending their civil and religious rights and liberties, against those that adhered to the King in his attempt to enslave the nation. The Parliament proved victorious and made the King their prisoner. The charge of high treason being brought against him, he was condemned by the House of Commons to lose his head. He suffered death, January 30th, 1649.

During the whole period of the reigns of James and Charles, in spite of the most savage persecutions, the spirit of the Puritans kept rising—kept rising amid the most distressing privations and sufferings; kept rising in enthusiastic pleading

for a purer church and a juster government ; kept rising until it achieved the larger liberties, civil and religious, of the Commonwealth, and, afterwards, of the Revolution of 1688.

III.

FROM THE COMMONWEALTH TO THE REVOLUTION.

THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

The Westminster Assembly, appointed by Parliament in 1643, held its closing session in the first month of the Commonwealth in 1649. Its 1,163 sessions had been held, during all that turbulent time, in Henry VII.'s Chapel and in the Jerusalem Chamber. It was intended that this Assembly should include among its members, adherents of all the chief parties among English-speaking Protestants, except the party of Archbishop Laud, whose popish innovations and despotic deeds had been the main causes of the troubles in Church and State. Parliament appointed this Assembly to draw up a scheme for the regulation of the National Faith and Worship. It consisted of a hundred and twenty-one ministers taken from the various shires of England, and thirty lay assessors, of whom ten were peers and twenty commoners. The General Synod of Scotland sent also five ministers and three lay elders as commissioners to the assembly. About twenty of its members were Episcopalians, but very few of them took their seats. The bishops of the Established Church never acknowledged its authority, and the king forbade its sessions under extreme penalties ; but it nevertheless continued to meet for six years, and became, if measured by the far-reaching consequences of its work, the most important council held in the history of the Reformed faith. It was convened July 1st, 1643, in Westminster Abbey, in the presence of both Houses of Parliament. The great majority of the members, both ministerial and lay, were Presbyterians ; five were Congregational Independents ; five were Erastians. "Thus was this Assembly a quintessence of four parties," as Fuller quaintly says. They were nearly all Calvinists in doctrine. Their chief difference related to ecclesiastical polity. The Congregationalists maintained the right of each congregation to manage its own affairs, and

objected to government by Presbyteries almost as much as by bishops. The Congregationalists, known "as the five dissenting brethren," were William Bridge, Jeremiah Burroughs, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, and Sidrach Simpson. This noble band of dissenting brethren occupied a prominent place in the Assembly, as they took an active part in the debates, especially on points of church order, "debating all things," says Bailie, one of the Scotch commissioners, "which came within twenty miles of their quarters, and astonishing the Churchmen by their great learning, quickness and eloquence, together with their great courtesy and discretion in speaking."

PRESBYTERIANISM AND TOLERATION.

What the Assembly had been specially called together for, and what they had first to consider, was the settling of some uniform order of public worship and religious teaching; their differences, therefore, did not for a while very markedly manifest themselves. Working in the spirit of the deepest religious earnestness, they brought out a "Directory of Public Worship," instead of the Book of Common Prayer, and also two manuals of doctrine, which are called the Westminster Confession and the Westminster Catechisms, larger and shorter. It would have been well for the reputation of this Assembly of learned Divines—well, too, for the peace and religious rights of the nation, if their labours had terminated with the production of those elaborate and important documents. They had been convened by Parliament to make a national settlement of religion; they had joined, English and Scotch, in the "solemn league and covenant," pledging themselves to unite the three kingdoms in one religion, and to extirpate popery, prelacy, superstition, schism and profaneness. Such an object, therefore, if either desirable or practicable, demanded, on all sides, mutual concession and mutual forbearance. That object, however, was defeated by the extravagant claims to ecclesiastical supremacy of the high Presbyterian party, who insisted on the establishment of their system, point by point; and nearly point by point it was more or less resisted—at one time by the Erastians, at another by the Congregationalists, often by both together. The demand that Presbyterianism should be established as the religion of the nation, on the ground that its claim rested on Divine right, brought on a discussion which lasted thirty days. The Erastians denied the Divine right plea to any

system, and maintained that the magistrate was at full liberty to determine all ecclesiastical arrangements according to his discretion. The Congregational Independents affirmed that if a system was to be proclaimed as having Divine right by warrant of Scripture, then they must be allowed to claim that distinction in behalf of Congregationalism; but they simply pleaded for the right to be tolerated side by side with Presbyterianism, and declared that they had no intention to supplant it.

The Presbyterians nicknamed toleration "the great Diana of the Independents." Some of them were literally furious in their denunciations of toleration and liberty of conscience. Edwards, a leading Presbyterian minister, writes thus: "Toleration will spoil any church and government. If Presbyterial government be settled, and a toleration be given in this land, that will mar all. A toleration is the grand design of the devil, his masterpiece, and chief engine he works by at this time, to uphold his tottering kingdom; he follows it night and day; working mightily in many by writing books for it and other ways; all the devils in hell, and their instruments, being at work to promote a toleration." Another of the same class of writers says: "To let men serve God according to the persuasion of their own consciences, is to cast out one devil that seven worse may enter." Chillingworth's famous work, "The Religion of Protestants, a safe Way of Salvation," was so detestable to Dr. Cheynell, a rigid Presbyterian, on account of its tolerant and free spirit, that at the interment of Chillingworth he threw the book into the grave, saying: "Get thee gone, thou cursed book, which has seduced so many souls; earth to earth, dust to dust, get thee into the place of rottenness, that thou mayest rot with thy author and see corruption." (Neal, vol. iii., p. 93.)

THE CONGREGATIONAL PROTEST AGAINST PRESBYTERIAN INTOLERANCE.

There was great excitement at this time, and party feeling ran into great excesses of speech; but the Presbyterians brought the foulest blot on their reputation by the Ordinance against Blasphemy and Heresy. This penal ordinance enacted that for certain specified offences under this head of Blasphemy and Heresy, if the party on his trial should not abjure his error, or if having abjured he should relapse, he should suffer death, "as in the case of felony, without benefit of

clergy." This law was passed in 1648, after Presbyterianism had become, in virtue of a Parliamentary Ordinance, the National religion ; but the disordered state of the country prevented the uniform enforcement of its discipline, although some Congregational Churches were made to feel for the time, as Dr. Waddington says, "that State Church Presbyterianism was in the ascendant." The Rev. Jeremiah Burroughs, one of the most moderate and candid men of that time, issued in behalf of himself and his brethren, this noble declaration :—"If we may not have liberty to govern ourselves in our own way, so long as we behave ourselves peaceably towards the civil magistrate, we are resolved to suffer, or to go to some other part of the world where we may enjoy our liberty. While men think there is no way of peace but by forcing all men to be of the same mind, while they think the civil sword a fit ordinance of God to determine all controversies of divinity, and that it must needs be attended by fines and imprisonment to the disobedient, while they apprehend there is no medium between a strict uniformity and a general confusion of all things—while these sentiments prevail, there must be a base subjection of men's consciences to slavery, a suppression of much truth, and a great disturbance in the Christian World."

Many pastors of churches, both in the metropolis and other parts of England, held similar views to those of Burroughs. They were thorough Congregationalists, although they might differ from one another on some minor points, such as Baptism or divine decrees ; but they were agreed in regarding religion as a matter between God and the soul, and as a matter with which civil magistrates and human law had no right to interfere. About this time several Baptist Churches in London published a Confession of Faith expressing similar views. It is much to be wished that the Baptists and Congregationalists had formed an undivided fellowship. Had they done so, Congregational Independency, which both hold, would have been vastly stronger to-day. It is surely a consummation which both should religiously strive to realise.

X BURTON'S VINDICATION OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

About this time the Church at Stepney, of which Henry Burton became pastor, was formed, and continues to the present day. Burton's "Vindication of the Churches Com-

monly Called Independent" is a triumphant exposition of the rights of congregations to choose their own ministers and manage their own religious affairs, according to the practice of Apostolic Churches and the teaching of Scripture. He says on this subject, "This House of God, wherein Christ rules as King, stands upon so many principles, as so many main pillars, not to be shaken, as—

"1. It is a spiritual house, whose only Builder is Christ, and not man.

"2. It is a spiritual kingdom, whose only King is Christ, and not man.

"3. It is a spiritual republic, whose only Lawgiver is Christ, and not man.

"4. It is a spiritual corporation, or body, whose only Head is Christ, and not man.

"5. It is a communion of saints, governed by Christ's Spirit, not man's.

"6. Christ's Church is a congregation called and gathered out of the world by Christ's spirit and word, and not by man. . . .

"And out of these principles do issue these conclusions :—

"1. That no man is the builder of this spiritual house.

"2. That no man nor power on earth hath a kingly power over this kingdom.

"3. That no earthly lawgivers may give laws for the government of this republic.

"4 That no man may claim or exercise a headship over this body.

"5. That no man can or ought to undertake the government of this communion of saints."

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NEAL'S SUMMARY OF PRESBYTERIAN ACTION.

Neal, the historian of Puritanism, has fittingly summed up the conduct of the Presbyterian members of the Westminster Assembly. He himself was a Presbyterian ; but in recording their proceedings, he says : "Thus ended the last Committee of Lords and Commons, and of the Assembly of divines, for accommodation. Little did the Presbyterian divines imagine that in less than twenty years all their artillery would be turned against themselves ; that they should be precluded the establishment by an act of prelatical uniformity ; that they should be reduced to the necessity of pleading for that indulgence which they now denied their brethren ; and esteem it

their duty to gather churches for separate worship, out of others, which they allowed to be true ones. If the leading Presbyterians in the Assembly and City had carried it with temper towards the Independents, on the footing of a limited toleration, they had, in all likelihood, prevented the disputes between the army and Parliament, which were the ruin of both ; they might then have saved the Constitution and made their own terms with the King, who was now their prisoner ; but they were enamoured with the charms of covenant uniformity, and the divine right of their presbytery, which, after all, the Parliament would not admit in its full extent."

THE TRUE RELATION OF STATE AND CHURCH.

It has seemed necessary to give this account of the action and bearing of the Presbyterians in order that the position and principles of Congregationalism may be rightly understood. It cannot be doubted that the leaders of Presbyterianism were good and godly men ; but their zeal for a State Church religion for the United Kingdom was "not according knowledge," not according to the principles and teaching of the New Testament, not according to the genius and spirit of Apostolic Christianity. They exhibited before the world a conclusive proof that no section of Christians, whether Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Congregational, can be safely entrusted with the prestige and power of union with the State. Even Congregationalism, when it wielded the power of the magistracy in New England, abused it for the purposes of persecution. The spiritual interests of mankind will be best served by an entire severance of Christianity from State trammels. Statesmen should respect the free progress of Christianity as a power working in human society for its salvation ; but they ought not with unhallowed hands to seize it, and convert it into State machinery, that its spiritual force might be let off as so much steam for State purposes. It is not the State's thing, but the Lord's. It is not for State monopoly, but for human use. It must reach the State, penetrate the State, sway the State ; but it must do this through individual citizenship, through the organisation of the elements of a sanctified humanity in society, and not through the political installation of a pliant and usable party. Only let the Gospel have its free course, and it will transfigure the State by the Spirit of Christ, without changing the State into a Church, and without putting a church, or denomination, over the State. Where religion is

made a State monopoly, instead of being allowed as a free social element, it becomes a strife-stirring ingredient, rather than a peace-pervading spirit, in the life of the nation. The free development of religious life should be secured by the civil power to all. An Arius should be as much under the protection of the civil power as an Athanasius. A Servetus should enjoy as much liberty as a Calvin. Tyndall had as much right to protected freedom, when translating the Bible and proclaiming his faith, as Wolsey or More in the State offices. Cartwright ought to have been as fully protected, when publishing his opinions, as Whitgift. The two thousand Nonconforming clergymen, who were ejected by a papalized Church, ought to have been protected in their rights by the State as much as the king himself. But these truisms are flung to the winds, as so many lies, while the Church is united to the State. State-established religions have always fostered an imperious spirit of persecution; but the Church of Christ—when disconnected with, when not made to be an imitator of, man-made monarchies—is the mother and model of all just, wise, holy, and well-ordered liberty.

But this liberty, this disconnection of the Church with the State, this politically free and ecclesiastically untrammelled Independency, even “the five dissenting brethren” did not fully understand; for they never advocated the great principle of separation between Church and State. Had they understood this, they would not have consented to be enrolled as members of the Westminster Assembly; for when they thus consented they conceded to the civil power rights which do not legitimately belong to it. But out of the turmoil and struggle, the conflict of thought, the political and religious controversies of that period, a clearer and truer view of Congregationalism was evolved.

GROWTH OF CONGREGATIONALISM UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH.

Under the Commonwealth, Congregational Independency greatly increased in influence and in the number of its adherents. It is interesting to observe how the Independents, although a minority in Parliament and outnumbered in the Westminster Assembly, “became so strong in the army as to rise to the possession of supreme power in the State. As men who had suffered most under the late misrule, they were among

the first to seize their weapons, and among the most resolute in wielding them. The oppressions of the last twenty years had greatly increased their numbers. In the army they made converts rapidly. Every man among them was more or less a polemic. In the intervals between military duty came theological discussions and often high debate on the comparative merits of Presbyterianism and Independency."

"Even in that religious age, the number of persons who might be described as outsiders—as persons having no clearly-defined religious principles—was not inconsiderable. But the circumstances of the times obliged even such men to ally themselves, more or less, with some religious party; and the Independents, from their more tolerant maxims, were the natural object of preference, both with the thoughtful and the thoughtless who were in that position. It was largely from this cause that the party comprehended under the name of Independents became suddenly so considerable, not only in the army, but throughout the kingdom." (Vaughan.)

Cromwell was well known to be a thorough Independent. When he became Protector he put into practice the principles of toleration which the Congregational Independents had so eloquently advocated in the Westminster Assembly. The officers of his army were godly men, and conducted religious services among the soldiers as Cromwell did, and after the manner of the Congregationalists. He gathered around him men of the greatest learning and the deepest piety, who were, like him, Congregational Independents. He placed many such men at the head of colleges in the Universities. Milton, England's greatest poet, was his secretary and his friend, and Milton was an Independent. But wherever he found gifts and graces—special qualifications for high and important offices, whether among Episcopalians, Presbyterians, or Independents—Cromwell called such persons to the service of the State. He was, in this respect, greatly in advance, both ecclesiastically and politically, of his own party. He showed much kindness to the Jews, and desired to admit them to the privileges of citizenship; but his generous and righteous purpose was thwarted—thwarted by the less generous leaders of his co-religionists—thwarted by those who ought to have hailed such a concession with acclamations of joy. They sought by half-hearted proposals of limited toleration to conciliate the intolerant Presbyterians; they alleged the evil consequences that might arise from universal toleration, instead of confiding in God to vindicate justice and

truth ; but they failed in the one, and they proved themselves inconsistent in the other.

Cromwell complained of the want of liberality on the part of the fourteen divines who were appointed as a committee to confer and to report on the fundamentals of religion. He said, when dismissing Parliament, " How proper is it to labour for liberty, that men should not be trampled on for their consciences. Have we not lately laboured under the weight of persecution, and is it fitting, then, to sit heavy upon others ? Is it ingenuous to ask liberty and not give it ? What greater hypocrisy than for those who were oppressed by the bishops to become the greatest oppressors themselves so soon as their yoke is removed ? I could wish that they who call for liberty now also had not too much of that spirit if the power were in their hands. As for profane persons, blasphemers, such as preach sedition, contentious railers, evil speakers, who seek by evil words to corrupt good manners, and persons of loose conversation, punishment from the civil magistrate ought to meet with them. Because if these pretend conscience, yet walk disorderly and contrary to natural light, they are judged of all, and their sins being open, make them the subjects of the magistrate's sword.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

While Cromwell was Protector of the Commonwealth, he maintained a general and generous toleration of all Protestants. Though he allowed the Presbyterian form of church government to be established, he disarmed it of its persecuting power. Though he protected all religious parties in their just liberties, he encouraged the Independents as the most liberal of all. He established a morning lectureship in Westminster Abbey, which may be described as undenominational, as Congregational and Presbyterian ministers lectured in turn. He allowed Westminster Abbey to be used for the worship of an Independent church, of which the Rev. William Strong, M.A., was the first pastor. William Strong was a Fellow of his college, Catherine Hall, Cambridge. After his death, a volume of his sermons was published by his friends, Thomas Manton, John Rowe, and George Griffiths, who commend them as having " the character and impress of Mr. Strong's spirit in them, and do plainly discover what hand hath passed upon them, the exceeding usefulness of the particular subjects, and that

piety and judgment that shines forth in the management of them, to the respects of the godly wise." Dr. Wilkinson, Dean of Christ Church, writes an address to the reader in the same volume, in which he says, "There is an excellent vein in his sermons; the further you search, the richer treasures you are like to find. . . . There was so great weight, both of words and sense, in this our reverend author's sermons, so much of worth, that they did appear as good upon a narrow disquisition as they did seem to be when they were delivered." The learned Theophilus Gale, author of "The Court of the Gentiles," wrote a commendatory epistle to Strong's "Treatise showing the Subordination of the Will of Man unto the Will of God"; also to Strong's "Discourse of the Two Covenants." In this latter, Gale thus wrote of Strong: "The author was, indeed, as it is said of Augustine, a *wonder of nature* for natural parts and a *miracle of grace* for deep insight into the more profound mysteries of the Gospel. He had a spirit, capacious and prompt, sublime and penetrant, profound and clear; a singular sagacity to pry into the more difficult texts of Scripture, an incomparable dexterity to discover the secrets of corrupt nature, a divine sapience to explicate the mysteries of grace, and an exact prudence to distribute evangelic doctrines according to the capacity of his auditors." This is high praise, especially as coming from a man so learned and judicious as Gale. It is quoted here to show that Congregational Independency was well and worthily represented in the ministry of the Congregational Church that worshipped in Westminster Abbey. There are, in the volume of sermons, two which were preached when Strong was chosen pastor of the Abbey Church, December 9th, 1650. One is called "Gospel Order, a Church's Beauty," the other, "Church-Officers, according to Institution." Mr. Strong died 1654, and was buried in the Abbey; but his body was disinterred and removed, with others, after the Restoration.

The Rev. John Rowe, M.A., succeeded Mr. Strong in the Congregational pastorate of Westminster Abbey. He was a Fellow of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. The Abbey Church seems to have been prosperous under the ministry of Mr. Rowe. "Several of Oliver's lords and members of Parliament were members." He was assisted in his work by a minister named Seth Wood. He was the author of several works, all of which display great piety and considerable learning. "Emanuel, or the love of Christ," is a book of eminent merit and worth.

With the restoration of Charles II. all was changed, the Independents being expelled from the Abbey. Mr. Rowe and his scattered flock preserved their ecclesiastical fellowship by meeting in Bartholomew's Close, and by meetings held privately in the parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn, where the pastor preached "as the rigour of the times would allow, till his death" (12th of October, 1677). The learned Theophilus Gale was his assistant at the time of his death, and succeeded him in the pastorate. Gale died in 1678, and was succeeded by the son of his predecessor, the Rev. Thomas Rowe, who removed with his flock to Girdlers' Hall, Basinghall Street. He kept an academy, first in Newington Green, and next in Little Britain. Amongst the pupils of his academy and the members of his church was Dr. Watts, the famous preacher, philosopher and poet, and the Rev. H. Grove, of Taunton.

Under the ecclesiastical arrangements of the Commonwealth, Baptist, Congregational, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian ministers received State patronage and emolument as vicars, rectors, preachers, and lecturers. There were some, however, both Baptist and Congregational, who would have nothing to do with State pay and State privilege. They were the ecclesiastical Radicals of the Commonwealth. John Goodwin, John Simpson, Henry Burton, and Beverley of Rowel, with many others, Baptist and Pædobaptist, repudiated all connection with the State in religious matters. They held the principles and took the platform of the Liberation Society of to-day. Milton took their side and poured forth his lofty eloquence against those who accepted State pay. He complains with some bitterness that those who had preached out prelates and casuists should be found clinging to the old "legal and popish arguments for tithes"; and especially "that Independents should take that name, as they may justly, from the true freedom of Christian doctrine and Church discipline, subject to no superior judge but God only, and still seek to be *dependents* on the magistrates for maintenance, which two things, *independence* and *State hire* in religion, *can never consist long or certainly together*. For magistrates, at one time or other, not like those at present, the patrons of our Christian liberty will pay none but such as, by their committees of examinations, they find conformable to their interest and opinions. And hirelings will soon frame themselves to that interest and those opinions which they see best pleasing to their paymasters, and to seem right themselves will force others as to the truth."

THE SAVOY CONFERENCE AND DECLARATION.

Not long before the Protector's death, the Congregationalists sought and obtained his permission to hold a general council, in the Savoy, to consider their position and their principles. Ministers and delegates of more than 100 congregations thereupon assembled, September 29, 1658. Many Churches, however, refused to send delegates through a cautious fear of further entanglements. Owen, Goodwin, Nye, Bridge, Caryl, and Greenhill prepared the "heads of agreements." These were published as "a Declaration of the Faith and Order, owned and practised in the Congregational Churches in England; agreed upon and consented to by their Elders and Messengers, in their meeting at the Savoy, October 12, 1658." This Declaration stands in the same relation to the Congregational Independents as the Westminster Confession to the Presbyterians. While the two practically agree in doctrine, the Declaration expresses the peculiar views of the Congregationalists respecting ecclesiastical polity. The actual differences between the two denominations seems so absolutely small—so small as to make modern students of Congregational and Presbyterian history profoundly regret that some basis of friendly union was not then discovered—so small that even now such Free Church communities ought not to find insuperable hindrances to tolerant and tolerating union.

The Savoy Declaration of fundamental principles may be thus summarised: "A particular church consists of officers and members, the Lord Jesus Christ having given to His called ones, united in church order, liberty and power to choose persons fitted by the Holy Ghost to be over them in the Lord. The officers appointed by Christ to be chosen and set apart by the Church are pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person into the office of pastor, teacher, or elder in a church is, that he be chosen thereunto by the common suffrage of the church itself, and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with the imposition of hands of the eldership of that church, if there be any before constituted therein, and of a deacon that he be chosen by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer and the like imposition; and those who are so chosen, though not set apart after that manner, are rightly constituted ministers of Jesus. The work of preaching is not so peculiarly confined to pastors and teachers, but that others also gifted and fitted by the Holy Ghost, and approved by the

people, may publicly, ordinarily, and constantly perform it. Ordination alone, without election or consent of the Church, does not constitute any person a church officer. A church furnished with officers, according to the mind of Christ, hath full power to administer all His ordinances, and where there is want of any one or more officers, those that are in the church may administer all the ordinances proper to those officers whom they do not possess; but where there are no teaching officers at all, none may administer the seals, nor can the Church authorise any so to do. Whereas, the Lord Jesus Christ hath appointed and instituted, as a means of edification, that those who walk not according to the rules and laws appointed by Him be censured in His name and authority, every church hath power in itself to exercise and execute all those censures appointed by Him. The censures appointed by Christ are admonition and excommunication; and whereas some offences may be known only to some, those to whom they are so known must first admonish the offender in private; in public offences, and in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offence being related to the Church, the offender is to be duly admonished in Christ, by the whole church through the elders; and if this censure prevail not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by excommunication, with the consent of the members."

These particulars respecting a declaration of faith, but little known, indicate the opinions entertained by the Independents, not only at the time of the Restoration, but, with some modifications, afterwards. It may, also, be here added that if, according to the theory of Presbyterianism, the ministry, as to the order of existence, precedes the Church, on the other hand, according to the theory of Congregationalism, the Church, in that same order, precedes the minister, *and in this significant fact may be found a key to some important differences between the two systems.* Besides those rules which had reference to the internal order of the churches, there were these three relative to their dimensions, their co-operation, and the catholicity of their fellowship. "For the avoiding of differences, for the greater solemnity in the celebration of ordinances, and for the larger usefulness of the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, saints living within such distances that they can conveniently assemble for divine worship ought rather to join in one church for their mutual strengthening and edification, than to set up many distinct societies. In cases of

difficulties or differences, it is according to the mind of Christ that many churches holding communion together do, by their managers, meet in a synod or council to consider and give advice; howbeit, these synods are not entrusted with any church power, properly so-called, or with any jurisdiction over the churches. Such reforming churches as consist of persons sound in the faith and of conversation becoming the Gospel ought not to refuse the communion of each other, so far as may consist with their own principles respectively, though they walk not in all things according to the same rules of church order."

The conclusions at the Savoy meeting were not ecclesiastical canons, but simply united opinions. They had no binding force. They aspired to no higher character than that of counsel and advice. Lest this Declaration should endanger their principles, the Assembly took the precaution not to invest it with binding symbolical authority; and to guard against the possibility of hierarchical schemes, they further enacted that no one should be ordained without having a call to some particular congregation. Similar precautions were also taken by them against all possible civil interference in ecclesiastical affairs, except cases in which Christian societies had laid themselves open to investigation by the civil authorities for the encouragement of civil disturbances.

DEATH OF THE PROTECTOR.

Before the Savoy Assembly of Congregational Delegates had finished their deliberations, the great Protector had finished his earthly course and entered into the "Saints' Everlasting Rest." A life of so much anxiety and labour could not long resist those infirmities to which human nature is liable. Feeling his health to be declining, he prepared for the solemn moment which was to place him beyond the discord and agitations of the present world. He was removed, during his illness, from Hampton Court to Whitehall. Amid the weaknesses of body and mind, he evinced a humble and devout spirit. He declared that he had endeavoured to promote the good of the nation and to preserve it from anarchy and a new war. He offered a most touching prayer—a prayer uttered at intervals, and, as it were, by snatches—a prayer worthy of being classed with the most saintly of human devotions. He then, having committed the nation and his own soul to the Divine care, expired, September 3rd, 1658, in the sixtieth year of his age.

CHARACTER OF CROMWELL.

The portraiture of the Protector's character has been drawn in the history of the nation and by the events of his life. He was a great man ; and some think he was as good as great. Few men have understood the principles of religious liberty better than Cromwell. Although for the sake of humouring the bulk of the nation Cromwell acceded to the establishment of Presbyterianism, which was the religion of the State when he assumed the government, yet he restrained the dominant party and guarded with a vigilant eye the liberties of the minor denominations. Oaths and subscriptions, with all the odious barriers to religious liberty being removed, the harassed Puritans issued from their concealment and beheld for once a bright and glorious day. Sitting under the guardian shade of the Protectorate, they feared no longer popish and prelatical molestation. Withheld by the mighty genius that grasped the reins of government from intruding on each other's rights, the sects were under no temptation of assuming a power which, in all probability, they would have abused. Each sect repaired to its own place of worship, and each minister, without the dread of interruption, preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The ministers of that time were equally eminent for their learning, their talents, their piety, and their zeal. They laboured earnestly to instruct the people, both publicly and privately. The churches, being thrown open to all, were filled with large congregations. The spirit of true religion was widely diffused ; the people became generally reformed ; places of amusement were deserted ; intemperance and profaneness were frowned from the streets ; families professing godliness observed the strictest decorum ; houses resounded with voices of prayer and praise ; public justice was administered with inflexible impartiality ; the moral glory of the nation shone with unexampled brightness. It seemed to many the grandest day that ever dawned on the English nation when Cromwell became Protector. One cannot wonder that men, having been put in possession of such religious privileges by a series of events so extraordinary, should indulge the hope that they were entering on an era of light and liberty—an era which prophets had foretold and martyrs had anticipated—an era which should be distinguished for the universal diffusion of truth, and be bounded only by the duration of the world. But the death of the Protector soon showed the baselessness of such calculations ; for it was soon seen that the elements of intolerance still lurked around the skirts of the

horizon, and only needed an adverse blast to set them in motion, and to spread over this hapless land the horrors of a tempestuous night.

RICHARD CROMWELL AND THE PROTECTORATE.

Richard Cromwell succeeded his father as Lord Protector of England. He was thirty-three years of age when he was raised to this high position. He was in all respects unlike his father, except, perhaps, in the sincerity of his piety. He was good, but feeble; amiable and humane, but neither clever nor ambitious; generous and desirous to do well, but his hand was not strong enough and his head was not wise enough to guide the ship of state in so tempestuous a sea. He was more fitted for the life of a quiet country gentleman than for a post of so much responsibility and danger. He was well received, however, by nearly all parties during the early days of his accession. Complimentary addresses were presented to him by the army, the navy, the city, and religious bodies. Dr. Thomas Goodwin presented an address of a very flattering character on behalf of the Congregational Independents together with the Savoy Confession. After a few months of tranquil administration, a storm of turmoil and peril succeeded. The army began to dictate a policy for the Government. The Presbyterians joined the Royalists in attempting to recall the Stuarts. The Congregational churches in London offered to raise three regiments for the defence of Parliament, if permission were granted. Unwilling, however, to perpetuate commotions and struggles for the support of his own interests, Richard quietly resigned his authority and retired to private life, as more congenial with his habits and predilections.

MONK BETRAYER OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

General Monk was the chief instrument in bringing about this reaction, and in promoting this combination of Royalists and Presbyterians. Like many others, he was professedly an Independent, but he was really a man of no religious character—a man with no principles for which he would make any sacrifice—a mere soldier of fortune. As far as religion is concerned he was a false-hearted hypocrite. He played the hypocrite with exquisite cunning, and sold his party with cold-blooded unconcern. He was an execrable dissembler, who gambled conscience, principle and religion, for profit, place and pelf.

CHARACTER OF THE DISBANDED SOLDIERS.

But what became of Cromwell's soldiers? How did those brave Independents behave? When this army came to be disbanded what happened? Were the fears, as to what the consequences might be, ever realized? Were the soldiers seen begging in the streets? Did they turn robbers? There were 50,000 of them turned loose on the world. But no evil results followed. They quietly took up useful trades, and "the Royalists themselves confessed that none were charged with any theft or robbery, and none were heard to ask an alms." Here is the testimony of an eye-witness, and a man far more inclined to the Royalist than the Roundhead side (writing in 1663): "Generally they are the most substantial sort of people, and the soberest. . . . Of all the old army now, you cannot see a man begging about the streets. But what? You shall have this captain turned a shoemaker, this lieutenant a baker, this a brewer, that a haberdasher, and everyone in his apron and frock, as if they had never done anything else; whereas, the others go with their belts and swords, swearing and cursing and stealing, running into people's houses, by force, oftentimes, to carry away something; and this is the difference between the temper of one and the other."

CHARLES II. AND HIS PROMISES.

Monarchy was restored by bringing the son of the late king, as Charles II. to the throne. He was chiefly indebted to the Presbyterians for his restoration. He declared from Breda "that no man shall be disquieted, or called in question, for differences of opinion in matters of religion which do not disturb the peace of the kingdom." He made large promises of religious liberty to the Nonconformists before he came to the throne, only to break them all after he possessed it. He was a shamefully-licentious man. He regarded religion as an engine of State, and not as restraint to the passions. His restoration was attended with a deluge of wickedness and debauchery, which spread itself, like a loathsome plague, from the court through the kingdom, and corrupted also the manners of the clergy. Men of High Church principles were preferred to Bishops. The terms of conformity were rendered harder than ever. Those who refused to conform were treated with the utmost rigour. The statute of Elizabeth was put in force—a

statute which had been suspended during the Commonwealth—a statute “which provided that any person above sixteen years of age, who should frequent conventicles, or persuade others to do so, should be committed to prison and there remain till he should conform and make submission.” Under its provisions the prisons were crowded with men like John Bunyan.

“BLACK BARTHOLOMEW.”

To make the case of Nonconformists still worse, the Corporation Act was passed. This Act incapacitated from office in any Corporation all persons who had not received the Lord's Supper, according to the rites of the Church of England, within a year before election. Then the Act of Uniformity quickly followed. As it took effect on Bartholomew Day, August 24th, 1662, it is called the English Black Bartholomew. This Act required all ministers who would continue in the Church, or be admitted to livings, to use one fixed form of worship, and subscribe the Thirty-nine Articles, and declare their assent and consent to a new edition of the Common Prayer-book, although many of them could have no opportunity of seeing it within the time. This Act obliged above 2,000 of the most able, conscientious, and devoted ministers to leave the Established Church. Large numbers of their respective congregations followed them. This secession brought an immense addition to the ranks of Nonconformity. *The name of Puritans was now changed to that of Nonconformists.*

Further, Penal Acts followed Black Bartholomew, such as the Conventicle Act and the Five-Mile Act—one being aimed at congregations, and the other at ministers. Under the pressure of these iniquitous laws the sufferings of our forefathers can never be fully told. Great numbers of them suffered the most extreme hardships, for they were fined, plundered, driven from their homes and families, and thrown into prisons by thousands. It is said that during the reign of Charles II. nearly *eight thousand* of them *died* in prison.

SUFFERINGS OF NONCONFORMISTS UNDER JAMES II.

James II. came to the throne as an avowed Papist. He had imbibed the most arbitrary principles of government. As

Lord John Russell says, "He settled in his own mind that he would make himself an arbitrary king, and the Roman Catholic religion the religion of the State."

Nonconformists obtained no real relief by the accession of James II. ; for he indulged or persecuted them according as it appeared best for the advancement of popery or his absolute power. He at first seemed in favour of a more liberal and lenient policy ; but he soon changed and put in force the penal laws against them. Then their meeting-houses were closed. Private conventicles were disturbed in all parts of the city and country. Informers were busy everywhere. Ministers and people were brought before magistrates and dragged to prison. Heavy fines were imposed. Calamities innumerable were endured. Worthy citizens were driven from their homes—their businesses were also ruined—all because they were Nonconformists. High-minded men and gentle women were thrust into "dungeons of the vilest description, where they were herded with some of the vilest of the community." It was calculated, by well-informed persons of those times, that about 70,000 Nonconformist families in England were ruined under the persecuting acts of Charles II. and James II., while 8,000 persons belonging to those families died in prison. It appears from the certificate of the Deputy of the Court of Exchequer at Westminster, whither offenders were cited from various parts of the country, that the fines, with accumulations at the rate of £20 a month, amounted, for twenty-three counties, to between four and five millions sterling ; but the fines, without accumulation, to £277,090. This was in addition to the fines and punishments inflicted by the local magistrates. The Quakers and the Scotch suffered enormously.

But the effect of these inhuman cruelties was very different from what those who inflicted them intended. The cause of Nonconformity, instead of being ruined, was strengthened thereby. This result was brought about partly through the infamous characters of the informers and persecutors, but chiefly through the piety, zeal and fortitude of the sufferers, who "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods and rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to suffer" for conscience' sake. Though they thus severely suffered, though such multitudes were murdered, or obliged to fly their country, their numbers were not diminished. Large additions came from the Established Church ; for clergymen as well as laymen deserted it, as a persecuting church, to take their lot among the Nonconformists.

CONFORMITY AND NONCONFORMITY BOTH IN PERIL.

But a change came over the contending parties. A common peril brought about a better understanding between Conformist and Nonconformist Protestants. The king tried to carry out his scheme for re-establishing Popery by issuing Declarations of Indulgence. This was the flattering trick for drawing Nonconformists on his side. As the king had issued his declaration without consulting Parliament it was illegal. When he ordered the illegal "Declaration" to be read in the churches, the Nonconformist divines of London united in beseeching the clergy to refuse, and the seven Bishops went to the Tower sooner than publish it. The clamour for persecution at once ceased among the clergy. It began to be discovered that on the most important points Churchmen and Dissenters were not so far apart as they had seemed. The clergy began to talk quite cordially about their "Nonconforming brethren," and to regret the persecution they had suffered so long. The talk, on all sides, was about toleration and comprehension. They said there must be no more imprisoning for conscience' sake. By a little widening of the church, they now thought it might surely be made broad enough to hold all parties. For a moment it seemed as if it would at last be possible for all Protestant Christians to be united in one great National Church. This fair vision, however, vanished with the fears that evoked it.

FLIGHT OF JAMES II.

The Revolution came. James II. fled from the country in ignominious haste. The throne was declared vacant by bishops and clergy, by nobles and laity, although they had quite recently preached the doctrine of the Divine right of kings. A great change had been wrought in many minds. The people were ripe for the Revolution. Puritan Nonconformists and Congregational Independents had learnt much during the past ten years. The Apostolic ideal of congregational polity would have been thrown into ignominious obscurity if the State-Church scheme of the Commonwealth had been perpetuated. It required the despotic expulsion of the English Black Bartholomew, when 2,000 godly ministers were driven out of the Established Church, to open the eyes and clear the vision of Congregational Puritans. The operation was sharp and severe; but it was necessary to arrest a backward movement and a downward tendency.

IV.

FROM THE REVOLUTION TO THE FORMATION
OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF
ENGLAND AND WALES.

.WILLIAM AND MARY.

“The Glorious Revolution” brought William and Mary, Prince and Princess of Orange, to the throne of England. Mary was a daughter of James II. Her religious principles were, however, very different from those of her father; for she was a sincere and conscientious Protestant, and although a churchwoman, she was generous and tolerant towards Nonconforming Protestants. Bishop Burnet, who had intimate intercourse with Mary and her husband during many years, describes her as not merely amiable and a patron of religion, but endowed with every Christian grace, an earnest believer in the Gospel, and a sincere disciple of Jesus Christ.

William was thoroughly worthy of so good a wife and so excellent a Queen. He was a decided Protestant; an enemy to persecution; a man of personal piety. He seems to have preferred the Presbyterian form of church government. He was a firm believer in the truth of religion. His tolerant principles and his indifference to the forms of church government, however, made him obnoxious to the great body of the clergy. He appeared born for the purpose of opposing tyranny, persecution and oppression; and for the space of thirty years he sustained the greatest and most glorious character of any Prince whose name is recorded in history. Those natural and inalienable rights of mankind—rights that are the foundations of all that is valuable in civil society, rights that had been deemed penal and criminal till he ascended the throne of Great Britain—were firmly maintained by him. To him we owe the assertion and the final establishment of our constitutional principles and privileges. His character was adorned by virtues rarely found amongst Princes—moderation, integrity, simplicity, beneficence, conscientiousness, and magnanimity. Time, which has cast a veil over his imperfections—for being human he had his faults—has added lustre to his many great and admirable qualities. He had true ideas of the nature and design of government. The beneficial effects of his noble and heroic exertions, as a constitutional ruler, will descend to the latest

generations of Britons, rendering his name justly dear to all friends of civil and religious liberty, and his memory ever glorious and ever-enduring.

It is not necessary here to describe the romantic and thrillingly interesting circumstances of his coming to this country, November 5th, 1688, of his enthusiastic reception by all classes of people, and of his easy accession to the throne ; for all that, nothing can be better than the histories of Green and Macaulay. But while thus merely referring to the coming and character of this great and good king, we must not omit to quote the testimony of the late Prince Consort—the good husband of our own good Queen. Presiding at the annual meeting of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, June 17th, 1851, his Royal Highness said :—“ William III., the greatest sovereign this world has to boast of, by whose sagacity and energy was closed that bloody struggle for civil and religious liberty which so long had convulsed this country, and who had secured to us the inestimable advantages of our Constitution and our Protestant faith.”

THE ACT OF TOLERATION.

The Nonconformists welcomed William III. with the most cordial congratulations, presenting a loyal address, which the celebrated Dr. Bates read. The king graciously promised that his power should be employed for obtaining relief from some of their burdens. The clergy, however, began to think that the king and queen had been too hasty in fraternising with the Nonconformists, and the points of difference began to look large and serious again. Bishop Burnet says :—“ The clergy began now to show an implacable hatred to the Nonconformists, and seemed to wish for an occasion to renew old severities.” The rigid Episcopalians thwarted an endeavour for abolishing the Test and Corporation Acts, and for bringing about a Comprehension Scheme, whereby all Protestants might be united.

Another effort was put forth, under the sanction of the king and queen, for the relief of Nonconformists. This was the *Act of Toleration*. This measure was suffered to pass both Houses with very little opposition, and received the Royal Assent on May 24th, 1689. This Act of Toleration formed an epoch in the ecclesiastical annals of England, and is deservedly considered as the religious Magna Charta of Great Britain. The Revolution is justly entitled to the honour of being the era

of *religious*, in a far greater degree than of civil, liberty ; for the Act of Toleration, which was the logical sequence and outcome of the Revolution, for the first time placed our freedom of worship on the firm basis of statute law. The effect on Nonconformist worship was quickly felt. They had up to that time worshipped, for the most part, in barns and out-of-the-way buildings, but from this time forward "great and fair meeting-houses" rose up in town and city.

We do not say, however, that the Act of Toleration was all that we could wish. Its title, for instance, does not sound very sweetly. It has been called, somewhat severely, "an Act to *permit* Almighty God to receive the worship of his creatures according to His own Word." Having, since that Act became law, travelled far towards religious equality, we have grown somewhat sensitive about "toleration." It is strange, however, how this word "toleration" has come down to us, for it is not to be found in the Act itself from beginning to end. It is simply entitled, "An Act for exempting their Majesties' Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England from the penalties of certain laws." Deficient as it may be in some important respects, it accomplished far more than either friend or foe expected at the time. Its full significance was not realised till long after it became law. It removed, as Dr. Brown has well said, a vast mass of evil without shocking a vast mass of prejudice. Two centuries have shown us how great an advance was made by this measure of justice, which had so quietly passed through Parliament, and received the Royal Assent. From that time Protestant Nonconformity acquired in England a legal standing and a constitutional right to exist. It was, henceforth, a criminal offence to interrupt the Independent, or the Quaker, or the Baptist, or the Presbyterian, when engaged in the act of worship. The registered meeting-house was as certainly under the protection of the King's Courts as the parish church. Thus the revolution in the State was followed by a revolution equally significant in the position of the National Church. It was no longer national in the old exclusive sense, for it could no longer claim all Englishmen, by sovereign right, as worshippers within its pale. The passing of the Act was a tacit confession that repression had failed, and that conscience had victoriously asserted its inalienable rights. The struggle on the part of Nonconformity was no longer to be for the mere right to exist, but for the possession of that complete religious equality before the law which, though

still indeed in the future, is sure to come. The great and beneficent measures which have passed into law since then—the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, Catholic Emancipation, the Removal of Jewish Disabilities, the Registration and Marriage Acts, the Abolition of Church Rates, the Opening of the National Universities, and the Legalisation of Nonconformist Services in the Parish Churchyards—all these are the natural results, the simple outcome and continuation of the Act of Toleration, an Act which may still be regarded as the *Magna Charta* of our religious freedom, and the basis of a large portion of our civil liberties.

HEADS OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS.

This period of our history was signalised also by some happy changes in the relative position of the Independents and Presbyterians. Before the Restoration a considerable movement had been made towards union, if not amalgamation, of the two denominations. It was felt by many that the things about which they differed were trivial as compared with those in which they were united. In Lancashire, Yorkshire, Worcestershire, and several other counties, associated meetings had been held as the result of the persevering efforts of Baxter and Howe. Immediately after the Revolution, the leading ministers of the two bodies in London united on a common platform of faith and order. A document, entitled “The heads of agreement assented to by the united ministers, formerly called Presbyterian and Congregational,” was drawn up in 1691, from which it appears that the Presbyterianism of the Westminster Assembly had become considerably broadened and modified. Neal, the Presbyterian historian, says: “They had abandoned their servile doctrines, and appeared in defence of the civil and religious liberties of mankind, upon the most solid and general principles.” They had “abandoned” their rigid views respecting synodical power, and now admitted that “every congregation is to be governed by itself.” They had now come to acknowledge that none should be admitted as members of particular churches except such persons as are sound in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, and are credibly professing cordial subjection to Jesus Christ. In this document, containing the heads of agreement, it is distinctly affirmed, “That each particular church hath a right to choose

their own officers ; and being furnished with such as are duly qualified and ordained according to the Gospel rule, hath authority from Christ for exercising government, and of enjoying all the ordinances of worship within itself."

This agreement presents the pleasing evidence that the Presbyterians had given up the most essential feature of their system. This change had come, as a kind of necessary result, during the persecution of the Restoration period, when they were compelled by circumstances to adopt the Congregational manner of fellowship and worship. But although the two denominations were now more closely united than before, they retained their peculiarities on some minor points, for in one of the articles it is declared that, "In the administration of Church power, it belongs to the pastors and other elders of every particular church, *if such there be*, to rule and govern, and to the brotherhood to consent, according to the rule of the Gospel." Another article declares : "Whereas divers are of opinion that there is also the office of ruling elders who labour not in word and doctrine, and others think otherwise ; we agree that this difference makes no breach among us." Thus the two denominations were drawn towards one another. Common perils and common privations did more than hairsplitting logic to bring about a clearer understanding and a closer fellowship. A little more Christian charity and a little less contentious logic would at this time easily and successfully have united the three denominations—Baptist, Congregational, and Presbyterian—into one great communion of Evangelical and Protestant Christians.

JOHN HOWE ON THE DEATH OF MARY.

Evangelical Protestantism lost a true friend by the death of Queen Mary, in December, 1694, after a reign of only five years. The Great Congregational Preacher, John Howe, preached and published a characteristic discourse on the occasion. With great loftiness of thought, pathos of feeling and eloquence of expression, he described her devout and pious life. He said that although "she was a consistent member of the Church of England, she has divers times expressed her acceptance, value, and desire of their prayers, whom she knew in some modes of worship to differ from her ; as one that well understood that the Kingdom of God stands not in lesser things, but in 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost' ; and that they

who 'in these things serve Christ, are acceptable to God,' and are to be approved of men. She was not inaccessible to those of her subjects whose dissentient judgments, in some such things, put them into lower circumstances." Bishop Burnet, in the Preface to his Discourse of the Pastoral Care, "refers in most touching terms to the evangelical faith and piety of Queen Mary. He says, "She had arrived at such a superior degree of knowledge, and had such a force of reasoning, with an irresistible sweetness of temper, that if our sins had not provoked God to blast all those hopes by her early admission to a better crown, we might have seen a glorious face put on our Church with relation to all its concerns."

WILLIAM'S REIGN MADE DIFFICULT BY TORY AND HIGH CHURCH PARTIES.

After Queen Mary's death the undivided royalty and responsibility of the throne centred in William. The enemies of evangelical religion and religious toleration gave the king much trouble. The Jacobites and the Tories imperilled not only his throne, but his life, by their plots. Neal says, "Thus the Tories and High Church clergy enjoyed the advantages of this *Glorious Revolution*, while they acted a most ungrateful part towards their deliverer and a most unkind and ungenerous one to their *Dissenting Brethren*." Neal also gives an account of the origin of Whigs and Tories in the reign of Charles II., and their relation to Low Church and High Church. He says, "Here was the rise of the two grand parties which have since divided the nation, under the distinguished names of *Whig and Tory*. The Whigs, or Low Churchmen, were the more zealous Protestants, declared enemies of Popery, and willing to remove to a farther distance from their superstitions; they were firm to the constitution and liberties of their country, and for an union, or at least a toleration, of dissenting Protestants. They were for confining the royal prerogative within the limits of the law, for which reason their adversaries charged them with *republican principles*, and gave them the reproachful name of Whigs, or sour milk, a name first given to the most rigid Scots Covenanters.

The Tories, or High Churchmen, stood on the side of the prerogative, and were for advancing the king above law. They went into all the arbitrary court measures, and adopted into religion the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance.

They cried up the name and authority of the Church, and were for forcing the dissenters to conformity by all kinds of coercive methods. No men did more to enslave the nation and introduce Popery into the Establishment than they. Their adversaries, therefore, gave them the name of Tories, a title first given to Irish robbers, who lived upon plunder, and were prepared for any daring or villainous enterprize." Neal adds to this description of the two politico-ecclesiastical parties, "The Nonconformists fell in unanimously with the Whigs, or Low Churchmen, in all points relating to liberty and the civil constitution, as they must always do if they are consistent with themselves."

Intolerance was cherished even by some of the most moderate of the prelates. The learned Stillingfleet and the amiable Tillotson, both educated by the Nonconformists, were influenced in a measure by an intolerant and unchristian spirit of opposition to Dissenters, especially in the matter of schools and education. It was well-known, however, by the Dissenters and the nation that the king was far more tolerant than his clergy. By his enlarged and liberal mind, and his upright example and beneficent influence, public opinion was elevated to a higher sense of justice and bigoted intolerance was more effectually checked. It was well-known that through the virulence of party spirit the British crown was not without thorns on the head of the great monarch; yet his principles and virtues were an unspeakable blessing to the nation, and Dissenters especially have good reason to revere his memory. He died on January 8th, 1702, through a fall from his horse, in the neighbourhood of Hampton Court. After his death there was discovered a lock of Queen Mary's hair, attached to a gold ring and hung round his neck. Thus passed away one of England's noblest kings.

THE REACTIONARY REIGN OF QUEEN ANNE.

Anne, second daughter of James II. and wife of Prince George of Denmark, succeeded to the throne of England on the death of William III. As a Stuart, she inherited those lofty notions of royal prerogative which had been avowed by that unhappy family. Anne became the dupe of the party that had so long vexed the nation with their bigoted intolerance. The restless bigotry of the Tory clergy, hostile to the principles of the Revolution, occasioned much hindrance

to the progress of religion—tore the Church with divisions—seriously alarmed the Dissenters.

“THE CHURCH IN DANGER” AND CHAPELS BURNT.

Anne had no sooner ascended the throne of England than the violent party of the clergy, knowing the principles of the queen, raised the cry of “The Church in danger,” which continued to be the watchword throughout her reign. Presuming on impunity, persecution was renewed by the intolerant zealots, and several meeting-houses of the Dissenters were pulled down by the excited mobs in provincial towns; but such proceedings had no sanction from the public authorities. Some disgraceful outrages were committed upon the Dissenters in London by mobs of infuriated people, instigated by the Tory and High Church party. That ecclesiastical firebrand, Dr. Sacheverell, was the chief instigator and ringleader of all this lawless violence. The Dissenting chapels of Burgess, in Lincoln’s Inn; of Earle, in Drury Lane; of Showers, at Salters’ Hall; were burnt in the Sacheverell riots. De Foe, who was an Independent, exposed the wickedness of this persecution with scathing sarcasm in his pamphlet, “The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,” the irony of which being slowly perceived, brought its owner to the pillory, which the people hung with garlands, and De Foe revenged himself by his “Hymn to the Pillory” in a very triumphant fashion.

The Tories and High Churchmen now sought to crush Dissenters entirely. They took advantage of the Act passed in the thirteenth year of Charles II., which prescribed that every schoolmaster should conform to the Church of England. This Act had not been repealed by the Toleration Act, so that dissenting schoolmasters were still exposed to its penalties. Many vexatious and malicious prosecutions were now brought against them. Under cover of this Act the attempt was made to prevent the Dissenters from continuing their educational institutions. About this time, upon a message to them from the queen, suggested to her by an address from the Church Convocation, Parliament “voted that *fifty* more churches should be built, and laid the charge of it upon that part of the duty on coals that had been reserved for building St. Paul’s, which was now finished” (Burnett).

In 1711 the Bill to prevent Occasional Conformity—a Bill

intended to drive all Nonconformists out of public offices in Corporations—was carried through both Houses.

In 1714 Lord Bolingbroke, the Premier, brought in the Schism Bill. Its object was to close all Dissenting academies and schools. Those at Hoxton, Homerton, Northampton, Taunton, Shrewsbury, and other places for training pastors would be utterly destroyed by carrying out the objects of this Bill. Schools for the poor on unsectarian principles, which Dissenting churches were now promoting, would also be dispersed. The Bill was opposed by the whole Whig party, who were always in favour of toleration and a liberal treatment of Nonconformists. The Bill was carried by a majority of two. But the Dissenters rallied for their very existence. A memorial from the three denominations—Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians—was presented to the queen, but she was so infatuated by Tory and High Church councils that it had no effect. On the 25th June, 1714, the Schism Bill received the Royal Assent. Happily for the Dissenters, who at this time were considered to number considerably over a million when the whole population did not amount to much more than five millions, the queen died on the very day on which the Act was to have come into operation. "The 1st of August is worthy of being commemorated by Protestant Dissenters as the anniversary of a providential deliverance as important as that commemorated by the Jews in their days of Purim."

THE NONCONFORMIST MINISTER CHEERED BY THE CONFORMIST BISHOP.

An interesting incident connected with the queen's death must not be omitted. Early on Lord's-day morning, August 1st, 1714, the Rev. Thomas Bradbury, Congregational minister, was walking along Smithfield in a pensive condition of mind. Bishop Burnet, that liberal Churchman, happened to be passing through in his carriage, when, observing Mr. Bradbury, he called out to him by name, and inquired the *cause* of his great thoughtfulness? "I am thinking," replied Bradbury, "whether I shall have the constancy and resolution of that *noble company of martyrs* who were burned to ashes in this place, for I most assuredly expect to see similar times of persecution, and that I shall be called to suffer in a like cause." The Bishop endeavoured to quiet his fears. He told him that the queen was very ill, and that she was given over by the physicians,

and that he was *then* going to Court to inform himself of the exact particulars. He assured Mr. Bradbury that he would despatch a messenger to him with the earliest intelligence of the queen's death; and that, if he should happen to be in the pulpit at the time of the messenger's arrival, he should be instructed to drop a handkerchief from the gallery as a token of the event. While Mr. Bradbury was preaching, the intelligence was communicated to him by the *signal* agreed upon. He suppressed his feelings during the sermon, but in his *last* prayer he returned thanks to God for the *deliverance* of these kingdoms from the evil counsels and designs of their enemies, and implored the Divine blessing upon "His Majesty King George and the House of Hanover." Mr. Bradbury ever afterwards *gloried* in being the first man in the kingdom who proclaimed King George the First.

"FUNERAL OF THE SCHISM BILL."

The whole body of ministers of the three denominations of Protestant Dissenters in London went up to Court to present an address to his Majesty, King George, on his accession to the throne, on September 28, 1714. Mr. Bradbury was one of them. As they were robed in dark Geneva cloaks, according to their fashion, a nobleman accosted him with the question, "Pray, sir, is this a *funeral*?" "Yes, my lord," replied Mr. Bradbury, "it is the funeral of the *Schism Bill*, and the Resurrection of Liberty."

GEORGE I. THE TOLERATING FRIEND OF NONCONFORMISTS.

According to the Act of Settlement, Prince George of Hanover was now proclaimed King of England. This gave great joy to all true Protestants, not merely in England, but throughout Europe. He came to the throne just in time to prevent a reaction, which might have proved detrimental for ages to the civil and religious interests of Congregational Independents and all other Nonconformists. The king declared his purpose to maintain "the toleration allowed by law to Protestant Dissenters, so agreeable to Christian charity, and so necessary to the trade and riches of the kingdom."

The adverse Bills of the last reign—those against Occasional Conformity and Growth of Schism—were repealed through the exertions of Earl Stanhope; but the clauses relating to the

Corporation and Test Acts were retained, lest "the Church should be in danger."

GEORGE II. THE PROTECTOR OF NONCONFORMISTS.

George II. succeeded his father in 1727. He continued the liberal policy of his father towards Nonconformists. Dr. Doddridge—a name still held in veneration by all evangelical Christians—was the tutor of a dissenting college for the training of ministerial students at Northampton. The High Church clergy in his neighbourhood, with a view to prevent Dissenters from being instructed in the principles of Nonconformity, commenced a prosecution for the purpose of enforcing the penalties of the unrepealed Schools Act. The case was made known to the king. He immediately put an end to the prosecution by the exercise of his prerogative, declaring that "there should be no persecution for the sake of conscience during his reign." Under his beneficent rule, therefore, Dissenters were protected in the quiet enjoyment of their principles and their worship.

HOW THE MANSION HOUSE WAS BUILT.

One incident may be mentioned connected with the Corporation of London, quite out of harmony with the liberal spirit of this reign. This Corporation, in 1748, made a law which empowered it to impose a fine of £400 upon every person nominated by the Lord Mayor who should decline standing for election to the Shrievalty by the Common Hall; and another fine of £600 was inflicted upon every one who, being elected by the Common Hall, should refuse to serve in the office. The object of this law was to reach those Dissenters who scrupled to take the Sacrament according to the Church of England, as the required qualification of the Sheriff's office. The fines thus levied upon conscientious Dissenters were expressly appropriated to the building of the Mansion House, which still stands in the centre of the City, a monument of princely magnificence and persecuting meanness; for more than £15,000 were obtained in this dishonest and disreputable manner. In 1754 three Dissenters were elected to this office. Believing that the Act of Toleration would protect them from the penalty of this iniquitous City bye-law, they resolved to have the case tried. It was in the first place taken to the Sheriff's Court and decided in favour of the City; but the Judges, in 1762, reversed that decision.

Then the Corporation appealed to the House of Lords, and the Lords, in 1767, confirmed the decision of the Judges in favour of the Dissenters. Lord Mansfield's great speech on the occasion, delivered in vindication of the Dissenters, was remarkable alike for its lofty eloquence and noble sentiments. He said, "It is now no crime for a man to say he is a Dissenter; nor is it a crime for him not to take the Sacrament according to the rights of the Church of England; nay, the crime is, if he does it contrary to the dictates of his conscience." His lordship then denounced the principle upon which the prosecution was conducted, saying, "They chose him that he might fall under the penalty of their bye-law, made to serve a particular purpose; in opposition to which, and to avoid the fine thereby imposed, grounded on two Acts of Parliament. As I am of opinion that this plea is good, I conclude with moving, your lordships, That the judgment be affirmed." By this judgment religious liberty was vindicated and the city Nabobs rebuked.

The Dissenters deplored the death of George II., as that of a paternal Prince, who had "guarded the liberties and promoted the interests of a dutiful and affectionate people."

GEORGE III. AND REVIVED RELIGION.

The same policy was, with some few exceptions, pursued during the reign of George III., who kept his promise "to maintain toleration inviolable." He succeeded his grandfather, George II., to the throne of Great Britain on October 25th, 1760. He seems to have cherished a sincere regard for religion. All denominations had confidence in his piety and virtues. Throughout his protracted reign he honoured those principles of civil and religious rights which he professed to hold, and which he proclaimed in his first speech from the throne. There were, however, many both in Church and State who were not as liberal and tolerant as himself. Vital godliness had greatly revived in England through the evangelistic labours of Whitefield and Wesley. Methodism had now become a spiritual power in the country. Its quickening influence was now felt in the Establishment as well as among all Nonconformist denominations. Congregationalists felt the power of a new enthusiasm and the blessedness of a revived spiritual life. Many of the superior clergy of the Establishment, alarmed at the increase of Methodism, the increase of its adherents and its preachers, employed vigorous efforts to check its progress

and to extinguish its holy fires. The Government, however, knowing that the king had promised to maintain the civil and religious rights of the people, would not allow any violent persecution. Oxford, going in the direction of persecution as far as it could, afforded a characteristic example of this ecclesiastical intolerance, for "six young gentlemen of Edmund Hall were expelled from the University, after a hearing of several hours, before Mr. Vice-Chancellor and some of the heads of houses, for holding Methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures, and singing hymns in a private house." Many such, thus driven from the Church, entered the ministry among the Dissenters.

THE EFFECTS OF AMERICAN REVOLUTION ON RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

There was another source of peril to toleration in matters of conscience and religion. Religious liberty was seriously menaced, in the early part of the reign of George III., by one of the most memorable of events in the history of Great Britain. This was the American Revolution and Declaration of Independence. Many of the Americans were descendants of the persecuted Nonconformists of England and Scotland, and were opponents to Episcopacy as unscriptural, and advocates of religious liberty as the birthright of all men. Those Nonconformists in this country, therefore, who held the same religious and ecclesiastical principles, naturally shared the same odium with them. Great efforts were made by the High Church and the Court parties to reverse the policy of toleration by branding the Dissenters as Republicans in principle, enemies to the king, and subverters of the Government, as well as determined foes to the established bishops and clergy, who were declared to be the main pillars of monarchy.

Meanwhile, what was the issue of the great struggle in America? The victorious Americans achieved their "Independence." They immediately formed a new constitution, the basis of which was an acknowledgment of the equal right of all men to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. By this new constitution they virtually declared the principle of a religious national establishment to be unscriptural in its nature, and to be pernicious to the interests of mankind. By this new constitution, religion, in all its forms, was equally protected; but it was left to win its way by its own spiritual

attractions, and it was left for support to the pious zeal and free offerings of its own friends. This was an experiment entirely new in the national annals of Christendom ; but it was what Congregational Independents had long pleaded for, struggled for, suffered for. While High Churchmen in England denounced it as a perilous and pernicious experiment, which would issue in universal infidelity and the triumph of atheism, Congregational Independents—both in America and England—were confident that it would be favourable to the attainment of individual and social happiness, and especially to the interests of spiritual Christianity and undefiled religion.

THE EARL OF CHATHAM'S VINDICATION OF DISSENTERS.

Under the Toleration Act ministerial Dissenters were required to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England. This they considered a violation of the fundamental principles of Protestantism. In 1772, therefore, a Bill to that effect passed the House of Commons, but, the Bishops opposing it in the Lords, it was rejected. It was rejected again the next year by the Lords, but an incident occurred in the debate which forcibly illustrates the spirit of the parties in those days. In the course of the discussion, Dr. Drummond, the Archbishop of York, attacked the Dissenting ministers with great violence. Among other things, he charged them with being men of close ambition. It was their good fortune, however, to have both a friend and an advocate in the great Earl of Chatham. That most eloquent and patriotic of Englishmen spoke such words in their defence as Congregationalists will ever cherish. "This," he said, "is judging uncharitably, and whoever brings such a charge without proof, defames." Here he paused for a moment, and then proceeded as follows : "The Dissenting ministers are represented as men of close ambition ; they are so, my lords, and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals ; and to the doctrines of inspired Apostles, not to the decrees of interested and aspiring Bishops. They contend for a spiritual creed and a spiritual worship ; we have a Calvinistic Creed, a Popish Liturgy, and an Arminian clergy. The Reformation has laid open the Scriptures to all ; let not the Bishops shut them again. Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded, which it would shock humanity to execute. It is said that religious sects have done great mischief when

they were not kept under restraint, but history affords no proof that sects have ever been mischievous when they were not oppressed and persecuted by the ruling Church."

DISSENTERS RELIEVED FROM SUBSCRIPTION.

In 1779 Dissenting ministers achieved a great triumph, for the Bill that proposed to relieve them from subscription passed with but feeble opposition. The apprehended dangers to the civil order and peace, and constitution of the nation, that might arise from an increase of liberty to Dissenters, had now been so far removed that they were actually *tolerated* on making the following declaration: "I, A. B., do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and a Protestant, and as such, that I believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as commonly received among Protestant churches, do contain the revealed will of God, and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice." This was, and still is, the creed of Congregational Protestants. This creed was the creed also of the celebrated Chillingworth, who said, "The Bible, I say, the Bible only, is the religion of Protestants." The Dissenters, however, were still far from realising their full rights. Confident in the righteousness of their cause, they therefore sought in 1790 a third time relief from the unjust "Test and Corporation Acts." Those Acts obliged all who held offices of trust to take the Lord's Supper according to the Church of England; but, although the relief they sought was so righteous, their appeal was again fruitless. Not only was the whole power of the ministry against them, but the clergy again rushed into the fray with the cry of "Church in danger!"

CONGREGATIONALIST AND EVANGELISTIC WORK

A few years previous, Robert Raikes, an inhabitant of Gloucester and a godly member of the Established Church, and William Fox, a devoted deacon of a Baptist Church in London, almost simultaneously commenced the practical working of benevolent schemes for the religious education of the children of the poor throughout the country. Missions to the heathen were also inaugurated with a Christlike enthusiasm for humanity. In all such noble and philanthropic works Congregationalists took an active and prominent part. They especially identified themselves with the effort to form and

maintain the London Missionary Society, and have ever since been its principal supporters. They also took an earnest part in the work of "The Village Itinerancy, or Evangelical Association for Spreading the Gospel in England," of which Hackney College, in its noble and commodious buildings at Finchley, is the modern representative. The Congregational churches also heartily joined the Friends, or Quakers, in the great mission for the "abolition of the slave trade," and never ceased their efforts till that atrocious traffic was suppressed throughout the British dominions.

JOHN HOWARD A CONGREGATIONALIST.

John Howard, whose memory the whole civilised world honours as the most Christlike philanthropist, was a member of a Congregational church, and about this time he was prosecuting his noble mission in visiting and ameliorating the conditions of the prisons of the world. He "received the thanks of both Houses of the British and Irish Parliaments for his eminent services rendered to his country and to mankind." Burke, the most eloquent of British Statesmen, pronounced his merited eulogy. Like his blessed Saviour, in whose self-sacrificing life and atoning death he found his mightiest motive to practical godliness, he, too, "went about doing good." Having "travelled on the reform of prisons," in less than ten years, more than 42,033 miles, he died of the plague, at Cherson, in Russian Tartary, January 20th, 1790. His splendid statue of marble "was the first monument of a nation's gratitude which graced the interior of St. Paul's Cathedral, in the metropolis of England."

METHODISM THE CHILD OF PURITANISM.

During the reign of the three Georges, in this century, Methodism became a great power, and mightily stirred the dry bones of religious formalism. It was the child of Puritanism, although it was nurtured in the Church of England. Dr. Vaughan speaks of a movement similar to that of Wesley and Whitfield before their time. He says, "Mr. Richard Davis, a Welshman, pastor of an Independent church at Rothwell in Northamptonshire, possessed the spirit of a Whitfield, and surrendered himself to the promptings of his generous nature. His passion to proclaim his faith to the ignorant and the perishing, even by means of laymen and of humble artisans,

scandalized the professional pride of his brethren. The bold man was not silenced by the formidable opposition made to him. But its effect was, that his kind of labour appears to have died with him."

Under wiser influences, the great evangelical revival in England might have dated from the former half of the eighteenth century, instead of the latter. Even in the time of the Commonwealth, the service of lay-preachers in spreading a knowledge of the Gospel was most ably urged and eloquently vindicated by the joint work of Revs. John Martin, Samuel Peto, and Frederick Woodal—three Congregational ministers—a work called "The Preacher Sent; or, a Vindication of the Liberty of Public Preaching by some men not ordained."

WESLEY'S MOTHER AND LAY-PREACHING.

John Wesley was at one time opposed to lay-preaching. Complaint was made to Mr. Wesley of this irregularity, and he hastened to London to interpose his authority. When his mother inquired the cause of his dissatisfaction, he said abruptly: "Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher I find." "John," she replied, "you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching, hear him yourself." This was the wise advice of a profoundly wise woman. John Wesley's mother was the daughter of Dr. Annesley, a Nonconformist minister. She learnt much, many lessons of common sense and practical Christianity, in the school of that Puritan home. She was eminent alike for high intelligence and devoted piety. She was well qualified, therefore, to give wise advice on the subject of lay-preaching, and John Wesley did well to give heed to his godly mother in this important matter. He heard for himself. His prejudices were overcome. He could only say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

CONGREGATIONAL LAY-PREACHING UNDER THE COMMONWEALTH.

It was thus lay-preaching originated among the Methodists. Lay-preaching, however, had been largely practised during the

Commonwealth among the Congregationalists. Cromwell himself was a lay-preacher. Many of his officers and soldiers were lay-preachers. In the "Savoy Declaration of Fundamental Principles" lay-preaching is distinctly approved. It says, "the work of preaching is not so peculiarly confined to pastors and teachers but that others also, gifted and fitted by the people, may publicly, ordinarily, and constantly perform it." This declaration was made October 12th, 1658. Thus Congregationalists adopted the principle and practice of lay-preaching nearly a hundred years before Wesley.

After the Restoration the practice became perilous. Amid the conflicts and struggles that followed the overthrow of the Commonwealth preaching of any kind—especially lay-preaching—was forbidden, under severest penalties, among the Dissenters. The Revolution brought much relief—relaxed stringent regulations, abolished penalties, broadened privileges, granted wider liberties. But we cannot wonder that the Congregationalists were somewhat slow, after so much repression and such sad experiences, to expand their church-life and energy by extensive employment of lay-preaching. Many of the Congregational churches in the metropolis, and in cities, towns, and villages of the provinces, notwithstanding the great difficulties by which they were beset, encouraged and employed the evangelistic services of lay-preachers during the latter part of the seventeenth century.

THE REVIVAL WORK OF WATTS AND DODDRIDGE.

During the eighteenth century learned and pious Congregational ministers endeavoured to arouse the spiritual life of the churches by the diffusion of religious literature. In this pious movement Dr. Watts and Dr. Doddridge took a prominent part. Dr. Watts's publications were extensively read and were greatly blessed to the edification of the people. His "Hymns and Psalms" and his "Divine and Moral Songs" were circulated to an extraordinary extent, both in England and America, and were the means of elevating and purifying the church-life and the home-life of the people. His "Guide to Prayer," his "Evangelical Sermons," his "Discourses upon Death and Heaven," his "Catechism for Children," his "Scripture History," his humble attempt towards the "Revival of Practical Religion"; these publications were the instru-

mental means] which the Holy Spirit used, in an extraordinary degree, for promoting the revival of evangelical godliness. They became considerably popular, and were extensively circulated, not only in Great Britain and America, but also in Germany and Holland.

Dr. Doddridge exerted himself with astonishing vigour in furthering the work of God. His labours were incessant as a pastor, as a tutor, and as a writer. His various publications for the promotion of piety and the revival of religion were widely read, and exerted an immense influence both before and during the evangelistic labours of Wesley and Whitefield. He published "Free Thoughts on the most Probable Means of Reviving the Dissenting Interest," "The Power and Grace of Christ," "The Evidences of Christianity," "Practical Discourses on Regeneration"; "A Discourse on the Sin and Danger of Neglecting the Souls of Men"; "Sermons to Young People," "Sermons on the Education of Children," and "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul."

These publications, intended for popular use, had a very extensive circulation, and were largely read outside the Congregational denomination. His "Family Expositor of the New Testament" became an incalculable blessing by promoting scriptural knowledge and family piety. The holy enthusiasm of his soul for the revival of religion was thus expressed in the plan he proposed to his ministerial brethren:—"That each minister agree to preach one Lord's-day on family religion, and another on secret prayer; that pastoral visiting be more solemnly attended to; that every head of a family, at least once a year, have a solemn charge to attend to the business of religion in heart and house; that the work of catechising be set up, in one form or other, in every congregation; that pious persons, who do not receive the Lord's Supper, be introduced into Communion; that such as give offence by their conduct be excluded; that people be advised to enter into little societies, consisting of six or eight, for religious discourse and prayer, and meet once a week or fortnight; that a small number of persons, most eminent for wisdom, piety, and zeal, act as a stated council for promoting religion in the congregation, that neighbouring ministers, in one part of the land and another, enter into associations to strengthen the hands of each other by united consultation and prayer."

These plans thus recommended by Dr. Doddridge, were warmly welcomed by Congregational Dissenters throughout

England. The Churches in America were also invited to co-operate with those in England for the purpose of thus seeking a revival of vital godliness. After correspondence with the principal ministers, a "General Consent for Prayer" was agreed upon for a period of two years from 1741. Prayers were constantly offered by thousands in both countries. In answer to their united supplications, showers of blessings descended upon multitudes in Great Britain and in America. Just before this "General Consent for Prayer" Wesley and Whitefield had commenced their great evangelising mission. Both, having returned from brief visits to America, began, during this "General Consent for Prayer," to preach the Gospel to thousands of people in the open air. On Whit Monday, 1742, Whitefield commenced preaching to the holiday thousands in Moorfields. This was during the "General Consent for Prayer," and this was signalised by great blessing. Thus the Lord answered the united prayers of His people in manifold ways—in raising up evangelists to preach the Gospel to the masses—in arousing pastors of churches to seek the conversion of the people—in awakening among the members of the Churches a more earnest interest in the study of God's work—in reviving the spiritual life, and in equipping with spiritual power, those who had united in this "General Consent for Prayer."

Another part of Dr. Doddridge's plan anticipated the London Missionary Society by fifty years. He thus put his proposal:—"Whether something might not be done, in most congregations, for the propagation of the Gospel abroad, and spreading it in the darker parts of our own land. In order to this that pious people unite as members of a society; that they daily offer up some earnest prayers for the propagation of the Gospel in the world, especially among heathen nations; that they attend four times a year for solemn prayer; that some time be then spent in reviewing the promises relating to the establishment of the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world; that any important information of the progress of the Gospel from foreign lands be communicated at their quarterly meetings; that each member contribute something towards supporting the expense of sending missionaries abroad, printing Bibles and other useful books in foreign languages, and establishing schools for the instruction of the ignorant." May not these suggestions have been the seed-thoughts that ultimately grew into some of those great societies that still bless the world by their beneficent and evangelical operations?

RISE OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

Fifty years after Dr. Doddridge proposed his missionary scheme, it was revived and re-affirmed, in spirit and in substance, by the Congregational churches in Warwickshire. At a meeting held at Warwick, in 1793, the question was considered, "*What is the duty of Christians with respect to the spread of the Gospel?*" After this question had been fully considered and discussed by the ministers then present, the following resolutions were adopted:—

(1) "It appears to us, that it is the duty of all Christians to employ every means in their power to spread the knowledge of the Gospel, both at home and abroad. ||

(2) "As ministers of Christ, solemnly engaged by our office to exert ourselves for the glory of God and the spiritual good of men, we unite in a determination to promote this great design in our respective connexions.

(3) "That we will immediately recommend to our friends the formation of a fund for the above purpose, and report progress at the next meeting.

(4) "That the first Monday of every month, at seven o'clock in the evening, be a season fixed on for united prayer to God, for the success of every attempt by all denominations of Christians for the spread of the Gospel.

(5) "That the Rev. Dr. E. Williams be desired to prepare a circular letter, on the subject of spreading the Gospel, by next meeting.

(6) "That the next meeting be held at Nuneaton, on Tuesday, August 6th, 1793."

The ministers then present not only pledged themselves to this good work, but they commenced a subscription amounting to £55.

Dr. E. Williams, of Birmingham, prepared the "Circular Letter" which was addressed to the "Independent Churches in Warwickshire." This "Letter" contained also a "Postscript" addressed to the "Independent Associations of Ministers in the other counties of England and Wales," inviting them to adopt a similar course. Missionary prayer meetings were held in response to these proposals, and considerable sums of money were contributed for missionary purposes at home and abroad. The minds of many had been prepared by Divine influence for this appeal.

The *Evangelical Magazine* had been recently started. It

became the medium for missionary appeal and missionary information. A letter from America on foreign missions appeared in it, September, 1793. The "Letters on Missions," by Rev. Melville Horne, were reviewed in the issue of that magazine for November, 1794. The Reviewer offered £100 from a "Gentleman," and £500 from a "Minister" as a commencement of the work of missions. The same magazine contained also a letter from Dr. E. Williams, detailing some of the plans and wishes of the Warwickshire Association. The *Evangelical Magazine* became the organ, from its commencement, by which earnest endeavours were made to revive evangelical religion in England, and to promote Christian Missions to the heathen abroad. Out of these efforts arose that great society, the London Missionary Society, whose magnificent achievements, in many parts of the heathen world, have shed a lustre on the Christianity of the nineteenth century. The formation of the London Missionary Society was a splendid exhibition of revived religion and Christian self-sacrifice. Ministers from different parts of the country met in London, Monday, September 21st, 1795, to consider the practicability of forming a Missionary Society. After much earnest prayer for the guidance of God, it was unanimously resolved that a "Mission to the Heathen was desirable." They gave a practical proof of the genuineness of their faith by subscribing, then and there, the sum of £740. It is said that when the resolution was passed, "That a Mission to the Heathen was desirable," tears of joy burst forth from many ministers, so as to impede the proceedings of the meeting. Public meetings continued for five days. The most eminent Congregational ministers were joined in cordial union with ministers of the Church of England, of the Presbyterian Secession Church, and of the Calvinistic Methodist Church. Sermons were preached on the occasion by the Revs. Rowland Hill, Haweis, Hey, Greathead, Burder, and Bogue. This delightful union of Christians of so many different denominations constrained Dr. Bogue to declare in his sermon, that this was the "funeral of bigotry" and the birth of a "New Pentecost."

The London Missionary Society is entirely catholic in principle. Its fundamental principle is not to send to the heathen the creed or polity of any denomination, "but the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." This principle has always been approved and sanctioned by the Congregational supporters of the Society. It is because of this principle that Congrega-

tionalists have adopted it and supported it as their own Missionary Society.

ORIGIN OF THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY.

Near the close of the eighteenth century another great society was formed, among the founders and supporters of which were some of the leading Congregationalists of the time. This society, the Religious Tract Society, was formed May 17th, 1799. Its object was, as its name implies, the circulation of religious tracts. It was originated mainly by a Congregational Baptist, the Rev. Joseph Hughes, A.M. Its first tract was written by a Congregational minister, the Rev. Dr. Bogue. Essentially catholic and evangelical, it has had a career of incalculable usefulness, scattering Gospel seed and diffusing Gospel light, not only throughout Great Britain, but throughout the Greater Britain, which includes the British Colonies ; yea, moreover, wherever Protestant missionaries have carried the Gospel in any part of the wide world.

THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

Five years later, 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed. This magnificent society originated, as did the Religious Tract Society, with the Rev. Joseph Hughes. This good man continued to labour for the institution he founded, as one of its secretaries, till his death, October 3rd, 1833. It has been liberally supported by Congregationalists from its foundation till now. It has almost belted the world with Bibles. It has translated the Word of God into all the languages where missionaries labour. It has brought the Word of God within the purchasing power of the poorest of the English-speaking race. Congregationalists have always taken a part in the management of this glorious society.

INTOLERANCE DEFEATED AND PERSECUTING MEASURES REPEALED.

In the early years of the nineteenth century some further measures of religious liberty and relief from civil disabilities were obtained by Congregationalists and other Nonconformists. Through the good providence of God the attempts that had been made from time to time to abridge the liberties granted by the Toleration Act had been frustrated. In 1811 another such

attempt was made by Lord Sidmouth. He brought into Parliament a Bill to place itinerant preachers outside the protection of the Toleration Act, but he failed in his unworthy attempt to revive religious persecution. This was the last attempt in Parliament to encroach upon the hard won, but dearly prized, religious liberties of English Nonconformists. It was soon followed by a substantial gain; for in 1812 the Five-Mile Act and the Conventicle Act were repealed. A further instalment of civil and religious rights was obtained in 1828, when Lord John Russell carried the Repeal of the most obnoxious clauses of the Corporation Act and the Test Act. To render these Acts harmless, however, a Bill of Indemnity had been annually passed for many years previously. The remainder of these unjust and infamous laws were expunged from the Statute Book of English laws in 1866. Through the action and influence of Tory churchmen of both Houses of Parliament, they had been retained more as an insult and a menace to Nonconformists than as laws in actual force. It was, therefore, a distinct gain to Congregationalists and other Nonconformists to have this insulting menace for ever wiped away.

FORMATION OF THE UNION.

Congregationalism grew in power and popularity during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In the Metropolis, and in all the cities and large towns of the provinces, ministers of conspicuous culture and commanding eloquence occupied the Congregational pulpits. The churches of smaller towns and villages were ably served by faithful and devoted pastors. The county associations were drawing the churches into closer fellowship. The large and prosperous churches of the towns were showing a more helpful sympathy with the smaller and weaker churches of the villages. Lay assistance in proclaiming the Gospel among the people was more generally encouraged and employed. Sunday-schools for the instruction of the young in Scriptural knowledge commanded the devoted service of the most earnest and intelligent members of the churches. Congregationalism was becoming increasingly influential as an evangelising force in our land, and, at the same time, the desire for a more practical and united confederation of Congregational churches was rising into intenser urgency. *The effective development of this desire was realised in 1831 by the formation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales.*

V.

The manifold results that have justified the formation of the *Union*—as seen in the increased number, power, and usefulness of the Churches—will be described in *Part II.* of this short HISTORY OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

Part II. will be published shortly after the Meetings of the INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES.

VOLUME 2

LUME

2

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From the Formation of the Congregational Union to 1862.

PART II.

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HISTORY OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

CONGREGATIONALISM, in the first quarter of the present century, had developed into active and vigorous life. This robust and progressive life demanded fresh channels for its expression and usefulness. As the outcome of this widely felt desire, the CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES was ultimately formed.

PRELIMINARY STEPS.

As a first step towards the realisation of this project, a *Congregational Library* was established, chiefly through the advocacy and exertions of the Rev. John Blackburn, Minister of Claremont Chapel, Islington, and Editor of the *Congregational Magazine*. A "Denominational House," or "Congregational Home," was wanted as a "centre of unity, and a medium of intercourse to the churches scattered through the land." The lease of a building in Blomfield Street, Finsbury Circus, was purchased. It contained "one large, handsome room, fifty feet long, twenty-five feet wide, and nineteen in height," with rooms for offices. But a library implies books. This need was soon supplied by the generous liberality of friends of the movement. Mr. Joshua Wilson offered at once to present a large collection of books as the nucleus of a Congregational and Non-conformist Library. One gentleman subscribed £500, eight other individuals 100 guineas each, seventeen others 50 guineas, and ten more 25 guineas each, besides many smaller sums.

Another movement, at this time, was powerfully influential in drawing Congregationalists into closer combination. The publications of the Ecclesiastical Society on the principles of Dissent—publications comprehensive in design and bold in thought—aroused a spirit of inquiry, rallied the advocates of Free Church principles, and intensified the feeling for associated action.

PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

After considerable agitation and discussion, not unattended by rivalries as to who should be first in the field—whether Dorset or London—a Provisional Committee was formed. This Committee, composed of country and London pastors, met for the first time in the Vestry of the Poultry Chapel, London, on

the 7th June, 1830, to promote the formation of a *Congregational Union for England and Wales*. An advisory address, containing a rough outline of a Scheme of Union, was issued on Tuesday, January 24th, 1831.

FORMATION OF THE UNION.

In the same year—1831—on the 10th of May, delegates, ministers and officers of churches, assembled in the Congregational Library to consider the propriety of adopting this Scheme, the meeting being presided over by the Rev. A. Douglas, of Reading. This assembly consisted of one hundred persons, eighty-two of whom were ministers, and eighteen laymen.

At an adjourned meeting on the following Friday, Rev. Joseph Fletcher, D.D., being Chairman, the whole plan of the Union, after considerable discussion, was unanimously adopted. The assembled delegates first affirmed, by a well considered and unanimously carried resolution, moved by the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, and seconded by J. B. Brown, Esq., LL.D.—

“That it is highly desirable and important to establish a Union of Congregational Churches throughout England and Wales, founded on the broadest recognition of their own distinctive principle, namely, the scriptural right of every separate church to maintain perfect independence in the government and administration of its own particular affairs; and therefore that the Union shall not in any case assume legislative authority, or become a court of appeal.”

PRIMARY OBJECTS.

The objects contemplated by the Union were then defined to be as follows:—

1. “*To promote evangelical religion in connection with the Congregational Denomination.*”

2. “*To cultivate brotherly affection, and sincere co-operation in everything relating to the interests of associated churches.*”

3. “*To establish fraternal correspondence with Congregational Churches, and other bodies of Christians, throughout the world.*”

4. “*To address an Annual Letter to the Associated Churches, accompanied with such information as may be deemed necessary.*”

5. “*To obtain accurate statistical information relative to the Congregational Churches throughout the kingdom and the world at large.*”

6. “*To inquire into the present methods of collecting funds*”

for the erection of places of worship, and to consider the practicability of introducing any improved plan.

7. "To assist in maintaining and enlarging the civil rights of Protestant Dissenters."

SECOND GENERAL MEETING.

The next general meeting was held by appointment at the Congregational Library on Tuesday, May 8th, 1832, the Rev. W. Chaplin, of Bishop's Stortford, being chairman, and 107 members being present, together with eight visitors. The meeting was adjourned, for further business and discussion, to the following Friday.

At this general meeting—

I. "It was moved by the Rev. J. A. James, seconded by the Rev. John Burnet, and resolved unanimously: 'That the report of the Provisional Committee, now read, be approved.'

II. "Moved by J. B. Brown, Esq., LL.D., seconded by John Brown, Esq., of Wareham, and resolved unanimously: 'That, in conformity with the resolutions of the general meeting held in May, 1831, for considering the propriety of forming a general union of Congregational churches and ministers throughout England and Wales, THE UNION BE NOW FORMED.'

At the same meeting in 1832, the Rev. J. A. James introduced a paper containing a Declaration of the Faith, Church Order and Discipline of the Congregational or Independent Dissenters. This paper was drawn up at the request of several brethren in town and country by the Rev. George Redford, D.D., his name, however, not being mentioned at the time. After the reading of the proposed Declaration, it was resolved unanimously to invite the opinion of the associated ministers and churches on the following questions:—

"Whether, in accordance with the example of our Nonconformist ancestors, it be desirable to present to *the public* a declaration of the leading articles of our faith and discipline; and whether it be deemed desirable that declaration should be made by such a statement as the following, which has been read but not discussed in the meeting of the Union, subject to such modifications as may be suggested and generally agreed on at the next annual meeting."

The above cautiously worded resolution was accompanied by a carefully prepared letter, stating the object of the declaration to be the communication of information to the public, respecting the doctrines held by Congregationalists.

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING—DECLARATION OF FAITH AND ORDER.

The next annual meeting assembled in the Congregational Library, under the presidency of the Rev. Joseph Gilbert, of Nottingham, on May 8th, 1833. A resolution proposing the adoption of the Declaration of Faith and Order was unanimously carried. About two hundred ministers and delegates voted for it, as having met with "the general approbation of the Churches," and as being "not intended as a test or creed for subscription."

There were some ministers and laymen of light and leading, however, who were unfavourable to the Union; who predicted its speedy failure; and who as it was said, did their best to realise the fulfilment of their prophecies. Be that as it may, it was now evident that the majority of ministers and laymen—especially the delegates of the churches—were confident in the belief that the Union would become a permanent institution, which would serve to widen and extend existing and recognised Congregational fellowship; that it would inflict no injury on the denomination; that, on the contrary, it would impart incalculable benefit to the churches and to the cause of evangelical religion. The infringement of the rights of churches, as some feared, by the assumption of legislative or centralised authority was sufficiently guarded against by the terms of the Declaration. The fourth article, indeed, affirmed in the most explicit language, the independence of every distinct church. The tenth article declared, also, that no church or union of churches, had any right or power to interfere with the faith or discipline of any other church. The views, or principles, of the Union with respect to established churches were distinctly set forth in the ninth article. That article declared, "that the power of a Christian Church is purely spiritual, and should in no way be corrupted by union with temporal or civil power." Never before had any general assembly of the representatives of Congregational Churches proclaimed such a principle.

It had been long held by some of the foremost leaders of Congregational principles, but never before proclaimed as the principle believed in and acted on by the majority of Congregationalists.

GRIEVANCES OF PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

One of the subjects brought before the Union Meeting of 1833 was the grievances of Protestant Dissenters, which Dr. Baldwin Brown (the father of the Rev. James Baldwin Brown,

whose honoured memory all Congregational Independents cherish) urgently and eloquently presented to and pressed upon the attention and acceptance of the Union. Resolutions were unanimously passed affirming the voluntary character of a scriptural church, the unjust oppression of the Establishment, and the rights of Dissenters with regard to all ecclesiastical dues, including church rates and tithes, university education, burial and marriage. The whole Congregational body, indeed, were called upon to use all lawful means, and to make all possible efforts, in order to obtain complete relief from the humiliating impositions which they, as well as all other Non-conformists, had so long endured.

OFFICERS OF THE UNION.

The Union was now fully organised. Mr. Benjamin Hanbury, author of three volumes of *Historical Memorials*, was elected treasurer, The Rev. Dr. Tidman, Mr. Turnbull, and Mr. Joshua Wilson were appointed secretaries.

DENOMINATIONAL INTERCOURSE.

At this same meeting of the Union in 1833, it was resolved that the Union, as it was bound to fraternise with every denomination holding the evangelical faith, and "avowing its belief in the unlawfulness of using the secular power in the kingdom of Christ," should propose to the United Associate Synod of Scotland an exchange of delegates at their annual assemblies. With a view to the promotion of union amongst all evangelical Protestants, in America as well as in Great Britain, it was recommended at the same time that arrangements should be made for the attendance of two or three delegates, in 1834, at the meetings of the Presbyterian Assembly in Philadelphia, and the Congregational meetings in New England. There was thus a distinct approach on the part of Congregational brethren towards fraternal intercourse with Presbyterians.

It has been deemed to be both appropriate and useful to sketch, with somewhat fuller detail than the limited scope of this short history permits to other events, the inaugural meetings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Henceforth the *history of Congregationalism becomes identified with, if not absorbed in, the history of the Union.*

ECCLESIASTICAL AND POLITICAL AGITATION.

The Congregational Union was brought into existence at a time of great political and ecclesiastical excitement. The

people had lately clamoured loudly for reform. The inglorious reign of George IV. had diminished their respect for the throne. The accession of William IV., in 1830, presented no prospect of amelioration. Despair drove some to the perpetration of acts of riot and revolution. The misguided peasantry, in some places, set fire to corn-ricks, and threatened to spread desolation through the country. Gibbets were erected on Pendenden Heath, and other public places, on which hung the bodies of "boys about eighteen or nineteen years old, but looking much younger," as a warning. This, however, did not quiet the people, nor frighten them into silence. The demand for Parliamentary reform became louder; but the King, under the advice of the Duke of Wellington, refused their request. Then the Ministry was defeated, Earl Grey was called to power. He promised an ample measure of reform. A Reform Bill was introduced on the 1st of March, 1831, by Lord John Russell. When this Bill was lost, excitement rose to a higher pitch than ever. Parliament was dissolved. The election that followed was accompanied with formidable riots. The new House of Commons gave the Ministers a majority of 136. The fate of the Bill now rested with the House of Lords. The casting votes of the Bishops threw it out. This brought Bishops into extreme disfavour. They became objects of bitter scoff and scorn when seen in the streets. More riots and burning of property took place. But the Reform Bill was again introduced, and on the 7th of June, 1832, was carried. Thereafter tranquillity was restored to the country.

Ecclesiastical affairs had become seriously critical. An evangelical clergyman wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Church in danger from itself." A broad-churchman, Dr. Arnold, proposed a scheme of general comprehension, by which he would give all the sects a share in the emoluments of the National Church, and free scope for all their peculiarities of doctrines and religious practices. These suggestions filled the High Church party with consternation, who immediately originated, as a counteractive force, the Tractarian Movement. They also deliberately set about writing down "the dissenting interest," as they called it, by publishing magazine articles, pamphlets, and books, "directed against the principles and practices of dissent." But their chief aim was to make the Established Church as much like the Church of Rome as possible.

FROM 1834 TO 1838.

The Rev. G. Redford, D.D., LL.D., occupied the chair of the Union in 1834. He was followed by the Rev. T. P. Bull, of Newport Pagnel, in 1835. The Rev. G. Payne, LL.D., Principal of Western College, Plymouth, was chairman in 1836. The Rev. J. Fletcher, D.D., London, was chairman in 1837. The Rev. John Angell James, of Birmingham, was chairman in 1838.

The records of the proceedings of the Congregational Union during the years from 1834 to 1838 are somewhat scanty, although the transactions were, doubtless, important. It is to be regretted that fuller information, during these early years of the Union, has not been preserved and made accessible.

CHURCH RATE ABOLITION.

The Congregationalists and other Nonconformists met the state of things existing at this time in the Established Church by action of a very practical character. Their first effort was directed towards the abolition of church rates. Several of the City and suburban parishes refused to make a rate. Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester led the way among the larger towns to adopt the same course. A Church Rate Abolition Bill was brought into the House of Commons in 1834, but it was withdrawn through the advice of the Whigs. This gave great dissatisfaction to Dissenters, a joint committee of whom summoned in May, 1834, a general convention of representatives from all parts of England. This convention, presided over by Mr. Edward Baines, M.P., declared that nothing less than complete separation of Church and State could secure to all classes of the people equal rights.

REGISTRATION ACT, &C.

This convention was one of the most influential that had ever been held for the purpose of promoting the public interests of Nonconformists. It had the effect of compelling the Government to withdraw their inadequate Church Rate Bill, and to introduce such needful measures as the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages, as well as the Solemnisation of Marriages by Dissenters. Hitherto there had been no legal record of those events for Dissenters. Lord John Russell's bills provided that there should be an uniform registration of births, deaths and marriages, and that public officers should be appointed to carry out its provisions. These reasonable measures—the Registration

Bill and the Marriages Bill—passed both the Commons and the Lords, in 1836, without a division.

CHURCH RATES AGAIN.

The time had not yet come, however, to rest in quiet thankfulness. There were other grievances to be got rid of. That which pressed, at this time, with special urgency, was the question of church rates. Congregationalists, therefore, now joined with other Nonconformists, in a vigorous agitation to effect their repeal. It was resolved, in October, 1836, to form a Church Rate Abolition Society. Among its founders may be mentioned the Revs. John Burnet, Thomas Adkins, John Howard Hinton, Mr. Joseph Hume, M.P., Mr. Daniel Whittle Harvey, M.P., Mr. William Ewart, M.P., Mr. T. S. Duncombe, M.P., Mr. Benjamin Hawes, M.P., Mr. Josiah Conder, Mr. John Easthope, and Mr. John Childs. Meetings of Congregational and Baptist Associations, as well as rate-paying inhabitants, took place in all parts of England and Wales, at which resolutions condemnatory of church rates were passed, and petitions to Parliament against them were adopted. When the Parliament of 1837 met, upwards of two thousand petitions were presented. The Whigs, however, opposed for many years all efforts in Parliament to abolish the obnoxious rates. This attitude of Whigs involved an agitation of thirty years before the burden on Dissenters was removed. Meanwhile, conscientious men were spoiled of their goods. Homes were invaded, and furniture seized to satisfy the unrighteous demands of the richest church in Europe. Some were even sent to prison for refusing to pay the unjust impost. Mr. John Thorogood, of Chelmsford, Mr. John Childs, of Bungay, Mr. William Baines, of Leicester, and Mr. John Simonds, of Aylesbury, had the honour of being imprisoned for non-payment of church rates, and by their imprisonment, of arousing an intense feeling of indignation against ecclesiastical injustice.

REV. THOMAS BINNEY'S CHARGE AGAINST THE ESTABLISHMENT.

The excitement caused by the address delivered by the Rev. Thomas Binney, at the laying of the foundation stone of the New Weigh House Chapel, had not yet subsided. The printed address, with the obnoxious notes, had, indeed, reached the fifth edition. The notes were added in confirmation of some points in the address, and were accompanied by the

testimony of evangelical clergymen, which went to show that the establishment, and not the religious society within it, *destroyed more souls than it saved*. The words of this note raised a storm of bitter resentment in the publications of the Church of England throughout the land. "That man Binney" was denounced with a violence of language which nothing could exceed. Mr. Binney met it all with a trenchant reply, to which the undisguised popery of the Tractarian Controversy, which was just then making itself heard, gave both point and proof.

But some of Mr. Binney's own ministerial brethren were not pleased with him; some thought he had compromised them; one even said, at a meeting of ministers in the Congregational Library, "Mr. Binney has betrayed us;" that highly respectable Congregational minister, the Rev. John Clayton, wrote to the Bishop of London to express his entire disapproval of what was being said of the Established Church. But the minister of Weigh House Chapel, went on his way with calm unconcern, knowing that he had said the right thing, in the right place, at the right time.

PRACTICAL WORK OF THE UNION.

The Annual Assembly of the Congregational Union, in 1836, was occupied with the consideration of important measures of practical work. Dr. Stoughton says it was then, at that meeting, "the Colonial Missionary Society was formed, partly as the result of a visit to the United States and Canada, paid by Dr. Reed with his companion Dr. Matheson, partly through the zealous exertions of Thomas Binney, and partly in connection with the appointment of Algernon Wells as secretary, in association with the other two ministers now named. All were personal friends, especially the last two."

Dr. Waddington supplies other details respecting the adoption of the Colonial Missionary Society by the Union. Some of the brethren wished the Union to undertake home missionary operations as well as colonial. The Rev. Dr. Redford and the Rev. A. Wells objected, and urged that the Colonial Mission form a part of that Union, and depend upon it. Then a lengthy discussion took place, after which the Rev. Dr. Ross, of Kidderminster, moved, and the Rev. G. B. Kidd, of Scarborough, seconded—

"That a Committee be now appointed to confer with the brethren engaged in the proposed Colonial Mission Committee, and report the result during the present sitting," which was

agreed to. The Committee retired. On their return, Dr. Brown, the chairman, reported, "the result of the Conference is, that the Provisional Committee of the projected Colonial Missionary Society have consented to be regarded as a Committee of the Union, and that the Society shall, on Friday next, be formed in consistency with this consent."

The Rev. Dr. Morison, of Chelsea, then moved, and the Rev. Dr. Matheson, of Durham, seconded :—

"That in the judgment of this Meeting, it is desirable that the Colonial Missionary Society be formed, in connection with the Congregational Union, and that the Colonial Missionary Society as arranged by Messrs. Wells, Reed, Binney, and Gull, and convened by public advertisement for Friday next, be adopted accordingly."

That meeting was held, and at that meeting the Colonial Missionary Society was duly formed and recognised. Urgent appeals for help came at once to this newly-formed society from Canada, from Cape Colony, and from the colonies of Australasia, where, as Mr. Binney said, "Many of those who have gone from this land, supporting while here a reputable Christian character, have become neglected, and, from the absence of the outward forms of religion, the inward principle has become much decayed, and their children have almost become barbarians."

THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY AND NATIVE CHURCHES.

About the same time a movement was started by the Rev. Joseph Ketley, which sought to secure for those emancipated negroes in Demerara, who were united in Christian fellowship, ecclesiastical freedom. He, at the request of his Church, appealed to the Directors of the London Missionary Society for permission to carry out, in the work of the Church, the principles and polity of Congregationalism. Mr. Ketley eventually secured, after much discussion and correspondence, the object that he sought; and had the satisfaction of seeing the fruits of his efforts in the freedom, growth, and stability of a great and successful Christian mission.

THE UNION'S RELATION TO HOME MISSIONARY WORK.

Now that the Congregational Union had become firmly consolidated, and had become a recognised centre of denominational influence and energy, it was thought that other societies, hitherto acting separately, might be brought into more direct

connection with it, with a view to more active sympathy and efficient support. The Home Missionary Society, which was founded in 1819, now greatly needed the reinvigoration which such a connection would afford. This question was fully discussed at a Conference in Carr's Lane Chapel, Birmingham, in 1839.

A resolution was moved and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Fletcher and the Rev. John Kelly, and carried with great enthusiasm :—"That in the judgment of this assembly, it is an especial duty at the present time of the Independent churches of this country to unite in vigorous home missionary efforts, conducted in entire harmony with their distinctive views of the truth, ministry, and ordinances of the Gospel, and of the constitution, discipline, and liberty of Christian churches."

The Irish Evangelical Society, which had existed since 1814, soon followed the course of the two other societies. It was adopted by the Union in 1840, but not without a good deal of discussion and negotiation.

Two societies, in which Congregationalists were interested—The Evangelical Voluntary Church Association and The Religious Freedom Society—were formed about this time ; but they had only a limited range of influence and a shortlived existence. Their titles sounded well ; but their management was too feeble, too lacking in moral courage, to last long amid such agitations and questions as then confronted them. So they died.

MR. MIALL'S IMPEACHMENT OF DISSENTING MINISTERS.

But something better—something more robust and resolute—was ready. The Rev. Edward Miall, one of the Congregational ministers of Leicester, saw the need and determined to meet it. As Dr. Waddington says, he "could not be brought into the state of mesmeric sleep so much desired by the Moderates in London." He relinquished his pastoral charge with the avowed purpose of devoting himself to the work of stimulating the faith, and directing the energies of Dissenters upon the question of Church and State. He removed to London, where, in 1841, he originated and conducted the *Nonconformist newspaper*. In the fourth number of that able journal (May 5th) an article appeared—an article throbbing with lofty eloquence and tremendous earnestness—in which Mr. Miall said, "*We charge the body of dissenting ministers with unfaithfulness to sacred principles, evasion of a noble mission, and seeming recklessness of all the mighty interests at issue.*"

This bold impeachment had the effect of arousing the leaders.

of our denomination. An Autumnal Session of the Congregational Union was held at Nottingham in October, 1841, which was mainly occupied in considering the attitude of Congregationalism towards the Established Church. This was the third of those autumnal meetings which have since been held in the chief provincial towns of England and Wales, and which have done so much to promote practical religion, to quicken the spiritual life of the churches, and to diffuse a fuller knowledge of our distinctive principles.

THE UNION AT NOTTINGHAM.

At this meeting, held at Nottingham, Dr. Vaughan gave a lecture on "Congregationalism viewed in Relation to the State and Tendencies of Modern Society," which occupied two hours and thirty-five minutes in the delivery. Dr. Morrison gave an address on "Congregational Church Polity, founded on the Bible, and the Bible alone, is the Religion of Protestants." The Rev. W. H. Stowell read a paper on "The Purity of Evangelical Doctrine, secured by Congregational Principles." The Union adopted and issued an elaborate manifesto, entitled, "Declarations of Views and Principles on various deeply interesting questions agitated during the present crisis as they affect the duty and reputation of the Independent Churches." It was a calm and dignified assertion and vindication of their ecclesiastical position and principles. Two sentences may be quoted as a sample of the rest: "But being moved by conscience towards God, and guided by sacred Scripture, Independents are ardently aiming to promote the simplicity, spirituality, and purity of the Church of Christ. They would remove political influence and power out of the Church; they would separate the entirely distinct functions of the body politic and the body ecclesiastic; and for this, those who would retain the political character and alliances of the Church assail them as political."

THE EDUCATION BILL DEFEATED.

The feeling that was now aroused became greatly intensified when it was discovered that the sixty-eighth clause of the Bill which Sir James Graham proposed in Parliament, for the education of factory children, was intended to increase the power and privilege of the Established Church, and renew the penalties and restrictions that their fathers had laboured so strenuously to remove. The *Patriot* and *Nonconformist* news-

papers sounded the alarm. Opposition to the measure was at once organised. Meetings were held throughout the country; petitions poured into the Houses of Legislature; the discomfited author of the obnoxious proposal, foreseeing an ignominious defeat, reluctantly withdrew it.

THE BRITISH SCHOOL MOVEMENT.

This defeated attempt, on the part of friends of the Established Church, to circumvent the Nonconformists in Parliament, led to an educational movement of great importance. This movement afforded practical proof that the opposition to the defeated measure did not arise from indifference to the evils of ignorance. Nonconformists were anxious that the children of the poor should be provided with suitable instruction in day schools, and that the practical truths of Christianity should be taught in all such schools. A conference of "delegates from the Congregational Churches of England," called to consider the subject of popular education, was held in London, on the 13th and 14th of December, 1843. After an address by Mr. Charles Hindley, the chairman, the following resolution was moved by the Rev. Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, and seconded by Mr. S. Fletcher, of Manchester—

"That it appears to the present meeting that, in addition to those unchanging reasons in favour of education which prove sound intelligence to be essential to man's social, moral, and religious welfare, there are considerations, special to the present state of this country, demanding immediate efforts for the better instruction of the people."

The next resolution was moved by the Rev. J. A. James, of Birmingham, and seconded by Mr. David W. Wire, of London—

"That the present meeting is fully alive to all the advantages of acting in union with Christians of other communions for the advancement of the great objects of religious benevolence, not necessarily involving differences of faith and practice, yet deems Congregational efforts for general education indispensable in the present state of this country."

Another resolution was moved by Alderman Kershaw, of Manchester, and seconded by Mr. George Hadfield, of Manchester, as follows—

"That a subscription be now opened for this great work; every donor, now or hereafter, as he may deem most advisable, to determine the appropriation of his donation—to the Central

Fund, to local efforts, to the British and Foreign School Society, or to such other institution for the training of teachers, as he may approve."

The last resolution was proposed by the Rev. A. Wells, and seconded by the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, of Leeds, as follows—

"That this meeting, utterly repudiating on the strongest grounds of Scripture and conscience the receipt of money raised by taxation and granted by Government for sustaining the Christian religion, feels bound to apply this principle no less to the work of religious education; and considering that the education given by the Congregational churches must be religious education, advises most respectfully but most earnestly that no Government aid be received by them for schools established in their own connection, and that all funds confided to the disposal of the Central Committee in aid of schools be granted only to schools sustained entirely by voluntary contributions."

A large fund, there and then, was subscribed, several gentlemen giving a thousand pounds each. Mr. Samuel Morley was appointed treasurer. Thus liberally and nobly was the Congregational Board of Education founded. The Homerton Training College was established, and has been since supported by this Board of Education.

FORMATION OF THE ANTI-STATE CHURCH ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Miall followed up the agitation, which Sir James Graham's proposal had aroused by a series of articles in the *Nonconformist*, in which he urged the necessity of forming a National association for effecting the separation of the Church from the State. The subject was thoroughly discussed at meetings in various parts of the country, and resolutions in favour of his proposal were passed with unexampled enthusiasm. A convention of delegates was summoned to meet in the following year—in the month of April, 1844—for the purpose of openly and publicly forming an Anti-State Church Association.

Several circumstances tended to stimulate interest in the proposed project. The bold attacks of the Tractarian party on the Protestant doctrines of the Established Church had excited great alarm among really Protestant Churchmen. The Oxford party of Tractarians was chiefly led, at that time, by Drs. Pusey, Manning, and Newman; but some of those who had been prominent leaders of that party had already seceded to the Roman Catholic Church. These secessions created suspicion

that some of the formularies of the Established Church encouraged Romanism amongst its members. What was most serious in this Tractarian movement—called Tractarian on account of the High Church tracts that its leaders published—was its undisguised sacerdotalism. As its sacerdotal pretensions could not stand the test of reason, it became easy and natural for such Churchmen to seek refuge in the authority and superstition of the Church of Rome.

Attention was directed to the same subject by an extraordinary movement in Scotland. The secession, upon the distinct ground of undue secular control in spiritual affairs, of four hundred ministers of the Church of Scotland, with the learned and eloquent Dr. Chalmers at their head, and their formation of a "Free Church" gave considerable impetus to the Anti-State Church agitation in England.

Nearly eight hundred delegates attended the Anti-State Church Conference, held in London on April 30, and May 1 and 2, 1844. Such a meeting—a meeting of such a character, and for such a purpose—had never before been held in connection with English Nonconformity. The Rev. John Burnet presided at the first Session. Papers were read by Dr. Pye Smith, Dr. Wardlaw, Dr. Cox, Dr. Price, Rev. J. P. Mursell, Mr. Edward Miall, and others. Special prominence was given to the religious bearings of the subject; but the whole question was dealt with, as it never had been before, in a most masterly manner by men distinguished alike for their intellectual ability and religious character. As a practical result of the Conference, "The British Anti-State Church Association" was formed; and the object it sought to accomplish was the liberation of religion from all governmental and legislative interference. The affairs of the Association were to be conducted by an Executive Committee of fifty, and a Council of five hundred members, and a Triennial Conference was to be held, Dr. Cox, Mr. Miall, and Mr. J. M. Hare being appointed honorary secretaries. Some of our Congregational leaders were conspicuous by their absence from this Conference. The Rev. John Blackburn, as editor of the *Congregational Magazine*, wrote against it. The Rev. Dr. Price, as editor of the *Eclectic*, wrote in unqualified praise of it.

DENOMINATIONAL LITERATURE.

The Rev. Dr. Vaughan was also at that time opposed to the plans and projects of the new Association. Although he had

but recently accepted the position of President of Lancashire College, he resolved to start a new quarterly review in opposition to the views and principles of Dr. Price, as expressed and represented in his *Eclectic Review*. The main object of Dr. Vaughan, however, as editor of the *British Quarterly*, "was to gain the higher classes to the side of Christianity;" while Dr. Price "hoped to win the mass of the people by advocating their cause in relation to political rights."

Dr. John Campbell had, also, begun to fill a conspicuous place in the sphere of religious journalism. He edited the *British Banner*, and afterwards the *British Standard*. Through the channels of those two newspapers he poured forth his thoughts upon the political, social, and religious questions of the day. He also edited two magazines, the *Christian Witness* and the *Christian Penny Magazine*, through which he conveyed valuable instruction on religious topics to the families of our denomination. As a newspaper editor, he was a veritable Boanerges, pouring forth the burning lava of his invective on all abuses, heresies, and vices. As an editor of religious magazines, he achieved an almost unprecedented success, not by any meretricious attractions, not by any pictorial illustrations, not by the sensationalism of religious story-telling, but by strictly Scriptural teaching in theology, by practical counsels on Christian conduct, and by full and varied information respecting the principles and work of our denomination. But this redoubtable champion of Puritan orthodoxy, who was, as he boasted, "ever on the watch-tower as to every appearance of heresy," had in him the elements of weakness as well as of strength; yea, his very strength became his weakness, for his strong will and energetic nature sometimes led him into those domineering extravagances that detracted much from his influence, both in the pulpit and in the press. Discount his influence, however, as much as we may, he was a foremost man for literary and religious power and usefulness.

The CONGREGATIONAL YEAR BOOK for 1846 was the *first* issue of a publication which, appearing annually ever since, has proved to be a most valuable repository of information respecting Congregational Churches and respecting the proceedings of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. It took the place of the Congregational Calendar, the latter being merged in the former in 1848. The Rev. J. Blackburn was the editor of the Calendar and the first two issues of the Year Book.

DR. R. WINTER HAMILTON AND REV. JOHN ELY.

Dr. R. Winter Hamilton, was called to the chair of the Congregational Union in 1847. The subject of his inaugural address in May was the "Union of Churches." It was an eloquent vindication of evangelical theology as the truest bond of union among Christians and churches. The autumnal session of the Congregational Union was held in York; but a few days before the time of meeting, the Rev. John Ely, after a short illness, died. Dr. Hamilton was profoundly affected by the sad event. The death of his beloved friend was the subject of his address. He said, "My brother, my companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, has fallen at my side. The earthly tie of thirty-six years' friendship—a friendship which suffered not the most superficial ruffling, or a momentary pause—is severed." Dr. Hamilton's two addresses are the first of chairmen's addresses that appear in the Year Books.

Dr. Hamilton did not long survive his friend; for in the following year, on the 18th of July, he entered into rest, aged fifty-four years, having held his pastorate in Leeds from 1813 to 1848. He attained great eminence as a preacher, and, perhaps, still greater as a platform speaker. His style, however, was considered by some critics as somewhat extravagant and pompous. It was certainly brilliant and sparkling. There was, indeed, a wide sweep in his thoughts, and he was sometimes eloquent even to sublimity. He was, all his lifetime, a very diligent student of a wide range of literature, as his various writings amply testify.

THE REV. T. BINNEY'S "IN MEMORIAM" ADDRESS.

The Rev. Thomas Binney occupied the chair of the Congregational Union in 1848. In May he set before the assembled delegates, in his own shrewdly eloquent style, "Suggestions on the Present Crisis." At the Autumnal Meeting his subject was "In Memoriam." He adverted to the loss sustained by the denomination in the removal of two ministers so eminent and influential as the Revs. Dr. Hamilton and John Ely. He also made special reference to the decease of Mr. Baines and Mr. Morley. He said, "Since we last met the grave has closed over the remains of two excellent and venerable men, who for some years past have both been greatly withdrawn from public life, but who, in their day, had each done something for general liberty and evangelical religion, for colleges and missions, the denomination and the Church, literature, piety, and benevolence,

among us. I refer to the late Edward Baines, Esq., of Leeds, and the late John Morley, Esq., of Hackney. The lives of these two men, if written as they might be written, would make a volume worthy the study of every young tradesman setting out in life. Very different in some respects, in their course, they were alike in their end. Both rose into influence and wealth, and the one (Mr. Morley) into public distinction and honour, by a course of exemplary industry, scrupulous uprightness, steady perseverance, firm and manly adherence to principle, moral consistency, sustained by religious faith, and from enterprise in business, which conscience could always approve and God be sought to bless, conducted with vigour, intelligence, and tact—qualities which it is no necessary effect of piety to impair. The course of Mr. Baines was more exclusively public and political; but the weight of his position, and his personal and local influence, were always given, in many ways, to every cause of philanthropy and religion.”

These two excellent men left worthy sons to follow their examples, and to promote similar enterprises of philanthropic and religious usefulness, as well as to develop their respective businesses. These two sons are known and honoured in Congregational history, as Sir Edward Baines, M.P., and Samuel Morley, Esq., M.P.

LONDON CHAPEL BUILDING SOCIETY.

The great need for more enterprise in chapel building now began to be felt. The Rev. Charles Gilbert called attention, in a series of letters, to the claims of London, the result of which was, that on February 19th, 1848, a few gentlemen favourable to the project thus set forth, met at the house of Mr. Joshua Wilson; and, after much prayerful consideration, they resolved to form a new society to deal with this great and urgent need, and this new society they called “*The London Chapel Building Society.*”

CHAIRMANSHIP OF REV. JAMES PARSONS.

The Rev. James Parsons, of York, was chairman of the Union in 1849. In May, he discoursed on “The Spirit to be Cherished by Independents,” and at the Autumn Meeting on “The Improvement of the Denomination.” Mr. Parsons was a prince among preachers. He was universally recognised, at that time, as one of the most eminent and eloquent pulpit orators in England.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF REV. DR. MORRISON.

In 1850, the Rev. J. Morrison, D.D., was called to the chair of the Congregational Union. The subject of his address was "The Improvement of our Churches." On the motion of Dr. Burder and Dr. Redford, he was cordially thanked for his admirable address.

The Chairman made a very touching reference to the absence of the Secretary of the Union through illness. He said "the name of Algernon Wells will always be associated with the truest and best interests of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. His masculine sense, his power of adjusting the most complicated portions of our business, his loving heart and eloquent tongue have been a tower of strength to the Union."

The Rev. Dr. Wardlaw was then introduced as delegate from the Congregational Union of Scotland, and received the most cordial greetings of the Assembly.

The Rev. Charles G. Finney, Theological Professor in the Oberlin Collegiate Institute, United States, was introduced to the Chairman and to the Assembly, and received its most hearty congratulations. Mr. Finney was already known in England through his theological works; but he became better known by his public services as an eloquent and powerful preacher.

In the autumn of 1850 Dr. Morrison was unable, through illness, to preside at the meetings of the Union in Southampton. The Rev. Thomas Binney was called, therefore, to occupy his place. A resolution, moved by Revs. T. Adkins and R. Elliott, declared: "That this Assembly has heard with satisfaction and delight the address now delivered by the respected Chairman." In the same resolution, Rev. J. Stoughton was thanked his admirable and devotional address.

On the motion of the Revs. Spedding Curwen and E. T. Prust, the Assembly passed the following resolution:—

"That this Assembly cannot enter on the consideration of the important matters which are to be presented to its attention without recording an expression of sincere and affectionate sympathy with the honoured brethren, the Rev. Dr. Morrison, Chairman of the Union for the year, and the Rev. Algernon Wells, its indefatigable and devoted Secretary. Whilst the assembled brethren would bow with un murmuring acquiescence to the afflictive dispensations by which they are deprived of the presence and effective assistance of their beloved friends, they would earnestly pray that they may be sustained and comforted under their present sufferings and speedily restored

to such a measure of invigorated health as will enable them to resume those duties which they have for so long a time discharged with much honour to themselves and great advantage to the churches of the denomination and to the world."

DR. CAMPBELL AND THE MAGAZINES.

After this, the Report of the Committee on the proposed Transfer of the Magazines was presented by the Rev. J. Angell James. As the management of the magazines had been in the hands of the Rev. Dr. Campbell, a somewhat warm discussion arose respecting his using the magazines for personal controversies. Some brethren did not approve of Dr. Campbell's action in the word-war waged between him, on the one side, and Dr. Price and Mr. E. Miall on the other. It was thought, therefore, that the time had come for separating the magazines, which Dr. Campbell edited, and which he had used as a medium for personal controversy, from their official and proprietary connection with the Union. Mr. S. Morley, Rev. Joseph Fletcher, Rev. J. Angell James, Rev. T. Binney, and others, took part in the discussion. Dr. Campbell explained, and expressed regret for some deviation from his own published editorial codes. It was then resolved: "That after the statement made by Dr. Campbell, the existing arrangement of the magazines be continued." Mr. Miall, who, in a leader in the *Nonconformist*, headed "Bombastes Furioso, Brag and Co.," had demanded Dr. Campbell's instant dismissal as the editorial representative of the denomination, was far from being satisfied with the decision of the Union; but it seemed, on the whole, best to let the conflict thus gently drop, as it soon after issued in a mutual understanding, and a renewal of friendship.

WORKS OF THE FATHER OF THE INDEPENDENTS.

At this same autumnal gathering, the Rev. R. Ashton read an interesting paper on the Rev. John Robinson, the father of the Independents, with a proposal for publishing the whole of his works. "Dr. Campbell suggested the desirableness of the works being published at a cheap rate, and generously offered to undertake the responsibility of their publication, if the assembly and the brethren would pledge themselves to assist the circulation." On the motion of the Rev. John Stoughton and the Rev. John Kelly, it was unanimously resolved: "That this Assembly, anxious to do justice to the memory of the generally acknowledged father of the Independents, both in England

and the United States, hails with pleasure the proposal to publish a collected edition of the works of the Rev. John Robinson, of Leyden, and hereby thankfully accepts the offer of the Rev. Dr. Campbell to undertake their publication on his personal responsibility."

REMARKABLE PROGRESS OF CONGREGATIONALISM.

In the Year Book for 1849 some statistics are given which show the remarkable progress of Congregationalism during fifty years. A tabular view is given, for each year, of the number of Independent chapels opened, of Congregational ministers ordained, and of brethren deceased during the last half century, from 1800 to 1849 inclusive. The total number of chapels opened is 739, of ministers ordained 1,451, and of brethren deceased 637.

DEATH OF THE REV. ALGERNON WELLS.

Through failing health, the Rev. Algernon Wells had felt himself obliged to resign the secretaryship of the Colonial Missionary Society on the 31st December, 1849. At the same time John Remington Mills, Esq., who had been identified with the Society from its very beginning, resigned his office as treasurer. He was succeeded by James Spicer, Esq., and the Rev. Thomas James was appointed to the secretariat.

Mr. Wells' health continued to decline. He died on the 29th December, 1850. He held the secretaryship of the Congregational Union to the time of his death, as well as his pastorate at Upper Clapton. The Rev. T. Binney, who preached his funeral sermon, spoke in highest praise of his Christian character and ministerial ability. As a secretary, he said, "It is hardly possible to award him excessive praise. His wise suggestions, his efficient plans, his judgment in counsels, his prudence in action, his full official preparations for business, whether of private committees or public meetings, his talent for correspondence, his tact in difficulties, his beautiful addresses, printed or spoken, his bearing and deportment, spirit and tone, everything belonging to him, within him, about him, marked him out as one whom God had peculiarly qualified for that kind of work which he did so well, and of which therefore he was called upon to do so much." The Committee of the Union appointed, as a special deputation to follow the remains of this good and holy man to the grave, Benjamin Hanbury, Esq., Edward Swaine, Esq., Dr. Campbell, and the Rev. J. C. Gallaway. The funeral took place on January 1st, 1851.

DEATH OF THE REV. DR. PYE SMITH.

Soon after another death—the death of a man pre-eminent in the world of theological learning—followed that of Mr. Wells. The great and good Dr. Pye Smith, whose memory will always be cherished by Congregationalists, as well for the nobleness of his Christian character as for his learned labours as a theological tutor and writer, passed peacefully away, in a ripe old age, in the act of breathing benedictions on his family and his friends, on February 5th, 1851. His dying attestation was characteristic of the living man :—

“I am nothing, but Christ is all.”

CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REV. JOHN KELLY.

The Rev. John Kelly, of Liverpool, was called to be Chairman of the Union for 1851. He spoke, in May, of the “Duties of Congregationalists,” and in the autumn of “The Past and Present State of Independency.” The two addresses were full of soul-stirring power—clear and emphatic in their assertion of evangelical truth, loyal and logical in their enforcement of Congregational polity and principle.

THE REV. GEORGE SMITH’S APPOINTMENT TO THE SECRETARYSHIP.

On the 2nd of January, a Confidential Committee was appointed, “to consider and adopt such measures as to them might appear most likely to obtain the person best suited to succeed in the secretaryship of the Rev. Algernon Wells, and to report progress to the General Committee, as frequently as to themselves might be deemed necessary or desirable. This subject was under consideration for upwards of three months, during which period several special meetings were held, and the question viewed, as far as the Committee was able, in all its bearings.” On the 22nd of April, the following Report was presented to the General Committee :—“The Confidential Committee appointed to recommend a successor in the place of the Rev. Algernon Wells, as secretary of the Union, after repeated and careful deliberation, beg unanimously to recommend to the General Committee that the Rev. George Smith, of Poplar, be nominated to the office of secretary for the ensuing year.”—(Signed) B. HANBURY, Chairman.

This Report was immediately considered and discussed, when, after due deliberation, it was resolved—“That the Report of

the Sub-Committee be adopted, and that, in accordance with the Report, the Rev. George Smith be recommended by the General Committee as secretary of the Union for the ensuing year."

On the motion of Rev. Dr. Stowel and Benjamin Hanbury, Esq., the Rev. George Smith was requested by the Assembly to accept the office of secretary for the ensuing year.

"The Rev. George Smith, at an afternoon meeting, acknowledged the kindness of his brethren, and their confidence reposed in him, by his election to the office of secretary, and expressed his readiness to make trial of it for one year."

Thus carefully and orderly was this important business carried out and brought to a successful close. The manner of this election presents a happy precedent for all future elections. The Rev. George Smith had special fitness for the office of general Secretary of the Union. He was courteous in his manner, ready and eloquent as a speaker, and wisely practical in business matters.

In order to lessen the labours of the General Secretary, the financial department, and the duties connected with editing the "Congregational Year Book," were assigned to the Rev. Robert Ashton.

The Rev. John Corbin, of Derby, read an excellent paper "On the Employment of Lay-Agents as Preachers by the Congregational Churches." This paper sketched a plan for training evangelists which the Nottingham Institute has since more than fulfilled.

The Rev. Professor J. H. Godwin followed with a valuable paper on a kindred subject, namely, "On the Best Means of calling forth the Talent of the Church for the Work of the Ministry." This paper presented many wise and practical suggestions for recruiting the ranks of the ministry—suggestions as much needed now as then.

A good deal of excitement was caused this year by the Census of Religious Worship taken on March 30th, as the denominational interests of Dissenters were largely involved in it.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION.

This, too, was the year of the Great Exhibition, which was the first that had ever been held on so gigantic a scale, and which was mainly owing to the energy and thought of the Prince Consort, Albert the Good. The idea of a World's Fair having been originated by him, it was supported by the Queen, and her Government, as well as by all the most distinguished

men of science, literature and commerce throughout the world. The Great Exhibition was held in the great glass palace specially erected for it in Hyde Park. This great glass palace was itself looked upon as one of the greatest wonders of the world. Its form, material, size, and adaptation, its rapid erection, its artistic decorations, and its fairy-like appearance, all combined to excite the astonishment and wonder of the millions who visited it. The opening of the Exhibition by the Queen on May 1, 1851, was one of the most gorgeous and splendid sights ever beheld. The products and manufactures of all lands were exhibited in the great building, from May 1 to October 14, to nearly six millions of people, who had come thither from every quarter of the globe. The order, peace, and harmony of the thronging multitudes who visited the Palace daily excited the admiration of foreigners, especially as no soldiery guarded the palace, or were seen in its vicinity. This Great Exhibition was, for the time, the holiday of nations—the temporary exhibition of universal brotherhood—a type and pledge, as it was then thought, of a coming day, when the “nations shall learn war no more,” and peace shall unite all peoples, and the earth shall become the home of one great happy and harmonious family. Mr. Baldwin Brown was selected, as a popular Congregational Nonconformist, and on account of the force and freshness of his orations on public events, to give expression to the sentiments appropriate to an occasion of public thanksgiving. He regarded the Exhibition as the “most successful display of the willingness of man that the world had ever witnessed.”

LORD JOHN RUSSELL AND “NO POPERY.”

Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which forbade the assumption of territorial titles by Roman Catholics, and rendered void all acts done by parties under these titles, was passed this year. The occasion and the discussion of this Bill created immense excitement. Meetings were held in all parts of England, at which innumerable resolutions were passed in favour of the Bill. At those meetings Dissenters vied with Churchmen in their denunciation of “Papal Aggression.” Some Dissenters, however, held aloof from this agitation, among whom were not a few leading Congregationalists, as they condemned “every kind of alliance between the priestly and the magisterial power.” At an anti-Papal meeting in Islington, at which the Vicar presided, Mr. Miall was hurled off the plat-

form by two clergymen, and denounced as a Jesuit in disguise, because he wished to move an amendment to a resolution in favour of the Bill. The Bill was opposed by such liberal statesmen as Graham, Gladstone, Palmer, Cobden, and Bright. There arose, ere long, a complete revulsion of public feeling respecting legislation on the subject ; so that the Nonconformists and statesmen who bravely withstood the popular clamour were fully justified by the changed judgment of the nation. The measure became a dead letter, the fittest historic reminiscence of which is *Punch's* felicitous cartoon of "The Naughty Little Boy who Chalked up 'No Popery !' and then ran away." After the disestablishment of the Irish Church, at a time when a new bishop was chosen, it was found necessary to repeal the Act, as Episcopal titles outside the Establishment had been made by that Act illegal.

IMPORTANT ADDRESS AT NORTHAMPTON.

The Autumnal Meeting of the Union was held at Northampton, October 13th to 16th, 1851. Besides the chairman's address, there were three others of special value. On the Monday evening Rev. J. Baldwin Brown delivered a powerful and eloquent address on "The renewing of Spiritual Life, the great need of our Churches." At the public meeting for the enforcement of Congregational principles, Sir William Lowthrop presided, and delivered an eloquent address on "The History, Principle, and Polity of Congregationalism." On the Thursday morning Rev. H. R. Reynolds, B.A., of Leeds—now Dr. Reynolds and the distinguished Principal of Cheshunt College—read a deeply interesting paper on "The prevailing forms of Scepticism, and the best means for its counteraction." He charged scepticism with refusal to perceive God in nature, in history, and in literature. It was one of the ablest discourses ever delivered before the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

OPENING OF NEW COLLEGE.

The commodious and spacious edifice, which was to be the home of the newly formed New College, was opened on 1st of October, 1851. The Revs. George Clayton, Dr. Henry Foster Burder, James Stratten, Thomas Binney, and the Principal, Dr. John Harris, took part in the opening ceremony.

The College is situated in St. John's Wood, South Hampstead. It comprises eight lecture rooms, a library, a laboratory, and a

residence for the Principal. The library is a lofty and spacious room, sixty feet by twenty-five, and contains 20,000 volumes. The building and fittings cost about £20,000. New College is the result of a combination of academical and theological institutions, namely, The London Academy of the Congregational Fund Board, The Academy of the King's Head Society, The Academy at Mile End, which afterwards combined to constitute Homerton College, Coward College, The Evangelic Academy, which was subsequently called Hoxton Academy, and Highbury College. These various collegiate institutions were merged into and became part of the New College that henceforth occupied this magnificent edifice. The Rev. Dr. John Harris was the first Principal of New College.

VOLUNTARY EDUCATION.

The Congregational Board of Education, and its sister institution, the Voluntary School Society, and that older establishment, the British and Foreign School Society, were vigorously pursuing their course of voluntary and religious education, and demonstrating to the world the possibility of teaching the rising youth without the aid of taxation. The agitation of the last few years, respecting the work of those societies, had proved immensely beneficial to the interests of education, and, to some extent, to the freedom of religion. The Reports of the Board of Education, read by the Rev. J. Viney, had become an interesting feature of the meetings of the Union.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REV. JOHN HARRIS, D.D.

The eloquent and learned Rev. John Harris, D.D., presided over the Assemblies of the Congregational Union in 1852. He took for his subject, in May, "The Principles and Duties of Congregationalists," and in the autumn, "The Mode of Preaching suited to the Present Day." The gifted author of *The Great Teacher* treated both his subjects with his wonted eloquence and force of reasoning. At the conclusion of his address in May, it was moved by Rev. Dr. Ferguson, and seconded by Rev. E. Mannering, "That the grateful acknowledgments of this Assembly be presented to Rev. Dr. Harris for his valuable and appropriate address." At the conclusion, also, of the May Sessions, it was moved by Rev. George Smith, and seconded by Rev. Robt. Ashton, the secretaries, "That the warm and grateful acknowledgments of this Assembly are due, and are hereby presented, to the Rev. Dr. Harris, the Principal

of New College, for the ability and kindness with which he has presided over the deliberations of these sessions of the Congregational Union, and begs to assure him of the earnest desires of his brethren for his continued usefulness as the President of New College, and in his arduous services for the Church of Christ."

AUTUMNAL MEETING AT BRADFORD.

The autumnal meetings of the Union were held in Bradford, Yorkshire, commencing with a devotional service on Monday, October 18th, at which the Rev. Newman Hall, then of Hull, delivered a remarkably able and impressive address on "The Liberty of Congregationalism." Dr. Harris's address on Preaching appropriately followed next morning. Another paper, written by the Rev. Eliezer Jones, of Plymouth, but read, at his request, by the Rev. J. Lockwood, was one of great ability. The subject of the paper was, "The Practical Value of Evangelical Congregational Nonconformity in the Present Age." Those three addresses, with some others of exceptional merit, made the meetings of the Union at Bradford memorable. The Report of the Committee says, "On all the public assemblies a gracious influence from heaven appeared to rest."

Early in 1853, the Committee of the Congregational Union intimated to the Rev. Dr. Campbell that he would be nominated as chairman of the Union for the ensuing year. Dr. Campbell wrote a long letter in reply, in which, among other reasons for declining the honour, he specially mentioned the fact that he was editor of the Union's publications, and that, "the two offices, it seems to me, are incompatible."

CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REV. JOHN ALEXANDER.

The Union met on May 10th, 1853, in New Broad Street Chapel, London, under the presidency of the Rev. John Alexander, of Norwich, the subject of whose address was, "The History, Progress, and Prospects of Independency." The subject of his autumnal address was, "The Aspects and Advantages of the Congregational System of Church Government." Coming from the City where Robert Brown and Robert Harrison formed a Congregational Church in 1580, and where Congregationalism both flourished and suffered so much in those early times, it was most fitting that the honoured chairman of the Congregational Union should thus earnestly and eloquently discourse on the progress and prospects, the principles and polity of Congregational Independency.

FORMATION AND WORK OF THE ENGLISH CHAPEL BUILDING SOCIETY.

The autumnal meetings were held in Manchester. The duty of Congregationalists to education was set forth by Edward Baines, Esq., of Leeds. The Rev. J. C. Gallaway, M.A., read a statement in relation to the English Congregational Chapel Building Society. At the autumnal meeting of the Union held two years previously in Northampton, the formation of a society to aid chapel extension throughout the country was suggested. The Committee of the Union were directed to give further attention to the subject, and to report accordingly at the next annual assembly. At the following meeting, held in London, a resolution was unanimously carried appointing a committee to prepare the constitution of the proposed society. The constitution so prepared was presented to the autumnal meeting in Bradford, was approved, and was then left in the hands of a committee with full power to carry the object into effect. This committee issued a large number of circulars containing an outline of the proposed constitution, and soliciting the freest expression of opinion upon its general merits. The replies were so numerous and so favourable, that the committee felt no hesitation in convening a Conference, to which many ministers and members of churches were invited, for the purpose of further deliberation and of immediate action. This Conference was held in the town of Derby in March, 1853, when was duly formed the English Congregational Chapel Building Society.

The magnificent work it has done abundantly justifies its formation. To the end of 1890, it reports 710 improved churches, containing upwards of 300,000 sittings, meeting the needs of half a million of people; sixty-four manses; property the estimated value of which is over £1,390,000; aid, given and promised, amounting to £145,482, besides several thousands expended in practical guidance. A very considerable sum has at the same time been *saved* to the churches through such guidance, as well as through the interest-free loans.

THE SCOTTISH DEPUTATION.

The deputation from Scotland was welcomed at this autumnal meeting by the following resolution, moved by Rev. George Smith, and seconded by Rev. Thomas James—

“That this assembly hails with pleasure the presence of the Rev. William Swan, the Secretary of the Congregational Union of Scotland; would express its sympathy with the Rev. Dr.

Wardlaw, who is prevented by sickness from being present at this Autumnal Meeting and taking part in its services; and would assure the churches associated in the Scottish Union of the fraternal regards and concern of the English Congregational Union for their welfare."

The Rev. W. Swan acknowledged the vote of the Assembly, and read, at the request of the Committee of the Union, a very thoughtful and suggestive essay on "The Mutual Influence and Intercourse of Churches." The Rev. John Corbin, of London, read a very wise and stimulating paper on "The Increase of Piety and Zeal in our Churches," for which he was cordially thanked by a resolution moved by the Rev. Dr. Vaughan, and unanimously passed by the Assembly.

REV. HENRY ALLON'S ADDRESS ON "YOUNG MEN."

A deeply interesting essay on "Young Men" was read by Rev. Henry Allon, of Islington. On the motion of S. Morley, Esq., and J. Perry, Esq., the best thanks of the Assembly were offered to him for his "valuable paper," and he was asked to place it at the disposal of the Committee for circulation.

DR. WARDLAW'S JUBILEE AND DEATH.

On the 16th February, 1853, the Rev. Dr. Ralph Wardlaw completed the jubilee of his pastorate, and received the cordial congratulations of his ministerial brethren in England and Scotland, with their grateful acknowledgment of the eminent services he had rendered by his pen and from the pulpit in defence of the Gospel, and in the cause of religious freedom and Christian philanthropy. His health had been declining for some time, so that he was unable to attend the meetings of the Congregational Union in October. For the last time he attended public worship on Sunday, the 4th of December, 1853. On the following Thursday he lectured to the students in the Theological Academy, and on Saturday, the 17th of December, he "fell on sleep." Dr. Wardlaw stood in the foremost rank, both as a Congregational minister and a Christian citizen. His natural endowments, both of mind and manners, were of the highest order, and his great gifts, both of learning and eloquence, were consecrated to the glory of God and the service of man.

DEATH OF REV. WILLIAM JAY.

The venerable William Jay, of Bath, after a pastorate of sixty-two years, resigned his charge October 5th, 1852, and

died December 27th, 1853, aged eighty-four years and seven months. The Rev. J. Angell James said, in a funeral discourse, "A month before his death, I was permitted to hold my last interview with him. I was thus privileged above most in being allowed to see him just when his feet were touching the brink of the dark, cold flood, and his eye was upon the stream, and I can assure you there was no shuddering to cross, nor casting a longing, hungering look on earth. Having recovered from a burst of emotion on my entering the room, he conversed, as far as suffering would permit, with solemn cheerfulness and deep humility; the great truths which he had so many years preached to you in life were now the foundation of his hope, and the support of his soul in death."

THE LIBERATION SOCIETY.

In 1853, the name of the British Anti-State Church Association was changed for "The Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control," and subsequently was simply known as "The Liberation Society." The earlier title was abandoned because of its alleged pugnacious character. The earlier title, however, expressed what is still the object and spirit of the society, and what must continue to be the object and spirit of the society, until its mission has been accomplished in the complete separation of the Church from the State. Mr. J. Carvell Williams was now appointed sole secretary of the society, a position for which his previous experience, as well as his thorough devotion to the cause of religious equality, specially fitted him.

EDWARD MIALl IN PARLIAMENT.

Mr. Edward Miall was now a member of Parliament, having been elected at the general election of 1852 for Rochdale. Recommended by Mr. John Bright, he proved to be so acceptable to the Liberal party that he secured a majority of 154 out of 904 electors who voted. For some time he silently studied the habitudes of the House of Commons, although he always voted in harmony with Liberal and Nonconformist principles. Mr. Miall soon discovered that in the House of Commons, as far as the position of Nonconformists was concerned, the sneer of contempt had been changed for the silence of respect. He forbore, however, to put forth any claim to be the spokesman of Dissenters as such. He distinctly declared, on one occasion, when speaking on the improvement of church property, "I

stand here as one of the nation, and in the eye of the law a member of the National Church. I may choose to forego the ministrations of that church, but I do not, therefore, surrender my legal right in it. I claim the better distribution of its revenues, not for Dissenters, but for the nation at large. . . . That property is national, and should be employed for national objects."

DEATH OF DR. COLLYER.

The Rev. William Bengo Collyer, D.D., passed away to his eternal rest on Sunday, Jan. 9th, 1854. For more than half a century he had been the pastor of the Congregational Church at Peckham. The Rev. Dr. Morison, of Brompton, who preached the funeral sermon, said, "In his death, Nonconformity has lost one of its brightest ornaments, and the metropolis one of its most cherished names. In his successful ministry of more than half a century—in his writings, which deserve a place in the best collections of theology—in his character, so bland and gentle, so marked by love and kindness and true generosity—he has left a rich legacy to the Church, which the present age can never cease to value, and which generations yet unborn will be taught to cherish. He has gone to his sweet rest and his ineffable reward. He has met multitudes before the throne, whom he was the instrument of conducting to glory."

CHAIRMANSHIP OF DR. A. M. BROWN.

The Rev. A. Morton Brown, LL.D., was Chairman of the Congregational Union for 1854. The Annual Assembly of the Union was held in New Broad Street Chapel, London, during the week beginning on May 8th, 1854. On the following morning Dr. Brown delivered his presidential address, his subject being "Signs and Duties of the Times." On the motion of the Rev. J. Alexander and the Rev. T. Binney, Dr. Brown was cordially thanked by the Assembly "for his most excellent and appropriate address."

FORMATION OF A CONGREGATIONAL UNION IN AMERICA.

The Report of the Union very appropriately referred to *the formation of the Congregational Union of the United States of America* in its opening paragraph as follows:—"Your Committee have great satisfaction in adverting to the homage paid to the principles involved in this Union, by the formation,

in May last, of a similar organisation on the part of the Congregational churches of the United States of America. The want of such an association had been long felt and deplored by many of the pastors and churches in the land of the Pilgrim Fathers. Closely connected as they were with the Presbyterian Associations of the different States, they suffered in public estimation from the want of any adequate visible bond of union, and were often exposed to incursions and losses from the want of that sympathy and effort which a more extended combination of counsel and prayer could afford. After due deliberation, the basis of a union has been laid in such a way as is likely to be permanent, and to secure all the advantages of mutual affection and co-operation, without endangering in any degree the independence and entire freedom from all external control of each separate but associated church. The outline of your constitution has been adopted by this newly-formed Union; it has already published one impression of a "Year Book" not unlike your own; it has, even now, its Congregational Library in the City of New York; the churches and associations attached to it are considerable and increasing; and the first Annual Assembly of the American Congregational Union will hold its sessions to-morrow and on Thursday, in the city of Brooklyn, under the presidency of its first chairman, the Rev. Dr. Bacon, of New Haven. The brethren connected with this movement are anxious to place themselves in friendly relationship with you, and during the present session you will have an opportunity afforded of reciprocating their fraternal emotions by the adoption of a resolution expressive of your pleasure in the formation of the Union. Your Committee have voted for the use of their library a copy of all your publications, and they will be most happy, in every practicable way, to testify their affectionate regard for the associated Congregational churches of the United States, in the earnest hope that the Scriptural unity of these communities, now spreading from the Atlantic to the Pacific, may be manifested by the increase of sympathy and the consolidation of effort for the advancement of the Gospel."

RELIGIOUS CENSUS OF 1851.

A very valuable paper on the Census returns respecting Congregational worship having been prepared at the request of the Committee by the Rev. John Kennedy, M.A., it was read by him to the Assembly. It was received by the Union with the deepest interest and with unanimous approval. This

pregnant remark occurs among the closing sentences of the paper :—

“When to the positive dissenters from the Established Church, in number very nearly equal to its adherents, we add the millions who unhappily belong to neither, and thus reduce the actual adherents of the Established Church to about one-third of the entire people of England, we place the injustice and inexpediency of the existing state of things in a light which will soon tell powerfully on the common sense of the nation.”

DISSENTERS AND THE UNIVERSITIES.

On the motion of the Rev. A. Reed, B.A., and the Rev. Dr. Harris, a petition was adopted by the Assembly, to be presented to the House of Commons, on the subject of the admission of Dissenters to the Universities.

FRATERNAL GREETING TO THE AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

On the motion of the Rev. H. Allon and H. Bateman, Esq., the following resolution was passed as a message of friendly and fraternal congratulation to the newly-formed Congregational Union of America :—

“That three-and-twenty years’ practical working of the Congregational Union of England and Wales having demonstrated the great value of such an organisation in collecting the sympathies and calling forth the energies of our churches for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, this Assembly rejoices to learn that the American Congregational Union has been formed; and this Assembly, therefore, would beg to assure the pastors and other members of this new organisation of their best wishes and fervent prayers for the welfare and multiplication of Congregational churches in the land of the Pilgrim Fathers.”

AUTUMNAL MEETING AT NEWCASTLE.

The Autumnal Assembly of the Union was held in Newcastle. Dr. Brown, in an excellent address, discoursed on “The Demands of the Times on Congregationalism.” The various societies connected with the Union having presented reports of their work, the special interest of the Assembly became centred in a paper by the Rev. George Smith, on “The Importance of

Extending Congregational Principles and Worship in Large Towns."

Simultaneous services were conducted in Newcastle, Shields, and Sunderland. Notwithstanding the remoteness of the places of meeting, and the comparative fewness of the Congregational churches in the extreme northern counties, the attendance of pastors and delegates was large and influential. An impression most favourable to the spirit and aims of Congregational Dissenters was admitted by all the local journals to have been made on the public mind; the churches were greatly refreshed by this visitation, and those who were favoured to visit them carried away a vivid and grateful recollection of the hearty welcome and friendly hospitality given them by the pastors and members of the Congregational churches, as well as by Christian friends of other denominations.

DR. HALLEY ON PREACHING AND PREACHERS.

The Rev. Robert Halley, D.D., of Manchester, was president of the Union in 1855. At the first Session, on Tuesday, May 8th, he delivered an address, replete with wise counsel and historic interest, on "The Retrospect of the Congregational Union." The usual vote of thanks to Dr. Halley for his very valuable address was heartily accorded by the assembly, on the motion of Dr. Raffles and Dr. Brown. The autumnal meeting was held in Poultry Chapel, London, commencing October 22nd. The subject of the president's address was "The Preaching Prevalent at the Present Time in the Denomination." This address was, in the judgment of many ministers, exceedingly able, well-timed, and heart-searching. One passage of it is well worth quoting, as it relates to a matter of considerable importance, and is as well worth considering now as then. "We want for many of our students, before they become pastors, more work and exercise, more freedom and power in preaching. My thought is something like this. Medical students, however prolonged and complete their course of study, are not licensed as practitioners until they have had considerable hospital practice. Barristers, on the contrary, go directly from their law-books to the courts; and what is the consequence? Hundreds must be trained to furnish tens, or even units, to conduct the business of the English bar. We cannot afford this waste of men. If we are to have well-educated ministers, and if, in the course of their studies, they cannot have sufficient time or opportunity for considerable practice in

preaching, let them be engaged, for some time afterwards, as preachers in the service of the Churches, learning to preach and to discharge pastoral duties, in the experience of a nearer approach to the pastoral office. They have had enough of the cloister; let them appear publicly in the church. I speak not now of co-pastors, nor of assistants to aged and infirm ministers, but of young men whose primary object would be their own improvement, while they would render essential service to both pastors and churches. As the arrangement would, in every instance, be temporary, and the young preacher would usually look for his settlement elsewhere, the expense to the people would not be very great. By such means our students would secure the inestimable advantage of a gradual, sure, and yet not slow introduction to ministerial services. Timidity would be encouraged, diffidence would acquire confidence; the best education, now often lost by repulse and disappointment, would enrich and adorn our churches. The preacher of slower growth, but of better progress, would usually produce the richer fruit. If our pastors generally were supplied with such assistance (they might well be called evangelists); and if, in our larger congregations, two or three were provided, there would be a strength and fulness of ministration such as often (and now more than ever) is employed with great advantage in our parish churches."

Dr. John Waddington contributed a very interesting paper on "The Church of the Pilgrim Fathers in Southwark."

Samuel Morley, Esq., presided over a great meeting in Exeter Hall, on Tuesday evening, October 23, "for the illustration and enforcement of Congregational principles," at which the Revs. Newman Hall, G. W. Conder, J. Burnet, and Andrew Reed were the speakers.

Mr. Charles Reed—afterwards better known as Sir Charles Reed, M.P.—read an exceedingly able and interesting paper on "Sunday Schools and the Church."

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

Some action was taken during the year in reference to Sabbath observance. Regarding the right observance of the Christian Sabbath as an inestimable blessing to our country, and the institution itself as the true palladium, protecting alike the temple of liberty and the sanctuary of worship, the Committee of the Union felt greatly alarmed at the proposal to open national places of public-amusement on the Lord's-day, and therefore petitioned Parliament to withhold its sanction from a

scheme not less injurious to the welfare of the working classes than it would have been dishonouring to the Lord of the Sabbath. The overwhelming majority of votes in the People's House against this attempt to remove an ancient landmark afforded the highest satisfaction to our churches and our people.

THE UNION AND THREATENED HOSTILITIES WITH AMERICA.

Another most important matter had, during the year, aroused the deepest concern and earnest expression of Christian opinion and principle. The alarming rumours of dissensions and threatened hostilities between the Government of Great Britain and that of the United States of America, which were so rife on both sides of the Atlantic in the latter end of the year, led the Committee of the Congregational Union to address a letter to the Congregational and other churches of America, in which they earnestly deprecated any interruption of friendly feeling and relationship between the two countries, and urged the cultivation of continued amity, by the memory of the Pilgrim Fathers, the bonds of a common origin, the ties of a Protestant Christianity, and the love of our adorable Redeemer. This letter, sent to all the great ecclesiastical bodies of the United States, was afterwards published in the *Times* and other influential English journals, and was widely republished in the American papers, and was commented on by them as being a most valuable document, possessing more than denominational worth, and rising to the character of a national opinion, which could not fail to promote greatly the object it had in view. This document, with similar communications from other friends of peace, had a most potent influence in averting an incalculable calamity; for the hostility of two such nations would have been a spectacle over which angels might mourn and demons triumph!

DEATH OF JOSIAH CONDER, ESQ.

Josiah Conder, Esq., a man alike distinguished as a sincere Christian, a loyal Congregationalist, and an able and voluminous author, was removed by death, during the year, from his labours and his friends. He had placed the entire Church of Christ under obligation by his valuable contributions of hymns and metrical versions of the Psalms, some of which will doubtless live as long as the English language shall be used, and vital godliness continued in the earth. The service which he rendered to theological literature, sound learning, religious journalism,

and evangelical nonconformity, was of the greatest value, and will long be held in grateful remembrance by our churches, whose principles he advocated on all suitable occasions, with so much enlightened, candid, and effective zeal. From the formation of the Congregational Union, he steadily lent his valuable services to promote its objects, both in its assemblies and through the press, and one of the last acts of public duty he was permitted to perform was rendered on its behalf by attendance at one of its committees.

DEATH OF THE REV. SPEDDING CURWEN.

The Rev. Spedding Curwen, of Reading, another distinguished servant of God, fell asleep in Jesus, January 9th, 1856, in the sixty-sixth year of his age, and forty-first of his ministry. His voice had often been heard from the platform of the Congregational Union. He was an effective and eloquent speaker. "His terse style, his sparkling wit, his spontaneous and genial eloquence, his full and varied information, and his fervid appeals, made him a welcome and effective speaker on all public occasions, not only in his own town, but throughout the neighbourhood and county." He was truly a brother beloved.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF REV. JOHN STOUGHTON.

In 1856 the Rev. John Stoughton was called to "the highest post of denominational honour." As President of the Congregational Union, he delivered an address on Tuesday, May 13th, on "Personal Deficiencies in Relation to our Principles." In finished but vigorous language he set forth our principles as Unity—not uniformity; as Freedom—not submission to human authority; as Growth—not stereotyped sameness. The Rev. John Angell James and the Rev. James Sherman expressed the cordial thanks of the Assembly to the President for his valuable address.

REV. GEORGE SMITH'S ADDRESS ON THE HISTORY OF THE UNION.

The Rev. G. Smith read an interesting paper from the Committee on the working and claims of the Congregational Union, being a review of the "History of the Union during twenty-five years." This paper showed what the Union had been to the churches and what it had done for the churches. It had furnished a bond of visible union, which by both pastors and churches had long been felt to be desirable. It had succeeded

in exciting a holier zeal for Christian truth, and a more anxious endeavour for the spiritual improvement of mankind on the part of the churches connected with the Union. The publications of the Union had been varied, and had been, on the whole, of great utility. As a channel of communication, the Union had been the means of fraternal interchange of friendly salutations and intercourse between Congregational brethren and churches in America and Europe. The Union had shown itself always alive to the religious liberties of Protestant Dissenters, and had efficiently exerted itself to obtain an extension of our rights when practicable, and to guard the sacred ark of our liberties when threatened.

THE "RIVULET" CONTROVERSY AND THE UNION.

The Union was, at this time, greatly disturbed by the controversy which had arisen respecting a volume of "Hymns for Heart and Voice" called "The Rivulet," by the Rev. T. T. Lynch. The volume was, on its first appearance, favourably noticed in the *Eclectic Review*. This favourable notice provoked the ire of Mr. James Grant, who denounced the book in the *Morning Advertiser*, the organ of the licensed victuallers, of which he was editor. He declared that it contained "not one particle of vital religion or evangelical piety," and that nearly the whole "might have been written by a Deist, and a very large portion might be sung by a congregation of freethinkers," &c. As Mr. Grant continued his reckless attacks, fifteen of the leading Congregational ministers in London issued a protest, declaring their abhorrence of that writer's mode of dealing with the book, and their fraternal regard and reverence for Mr. Lynch. This protest had the effect of stirring up the latent fires in the great heart of Dr. Campbell, editor of the *British Banner*. He rushed into this "Rivulet Controversy" with even more than his wonted energy, and asserted with an exaggeration lamentably ludicrous, that "nothing like it had occurred within the memory of the present generation, or, perhaps, since the days of the Reformation." He published a series of letters on "Nonconformist Theology," which he addressed to the "Principals and Professors of the Independent and Baptist Colleges of England," and in which he maintained that "The Rivulet" was "incomparably the most unspiritual publication of the kind in the English language." Strange it is that such words, so utterly untrue to the book itself, could have been written by one who believed

himself to have been "set for the defence of the truth;" for some of those very hymns, thus recklessly condemned, now find a place in nearly all collections of Christian psalmody, and are cherished by Christian people as the finest, the sweetest and the most spiritual hymns in the English language. Because the metaphors, style, and thoughts of "Rivulet" hymns were fresh and new—because they were not fashioned according to old models, and did not run in old ruts—because they had in them the essence of living naturalness as well as the freshness and fragrance of a spring-time experience, they were not understood by those strict adherents to a fossilised orthodoxy of manner and method. The Rev. T. Binney published a remonstrance against the articles of the *Banner*. "The Ethics of Quotation," a pamphlet which proved to demonstration that the charges against Mr. Lynch were founded, to a large extent, on garbled and distorted extracts, was extensively circulated.

Party feeling had become so embittered as to imperil the Union. It had been arranged that the Autumnal Meeting of the Union should be held at Cheltenham; but as notice had been given by the Rev. Baldwin Brown that matters relating to the "Rivulet Controversy" would be brought before the Union in the autumn, the friends at Cheltenham, becoming alarmed, informed the Committee that, unless the notice be withdrawn and a conference be held in London to bring about healing measures, they should absolutely decline to entertain the pastors and delegates of the Union. The Conference was held in London on the 23rd of September, 1856; but the steps taken in reference to the proposed arbitration did not, in the opinion of the friends at Cheltenham, nor in the judgment of the Committee, furnish adequate assurance that the meetings could be held without the introduction of topics controversial and irrelevant to the Assembly. They therefore resolved "to postpone the holding of the Autumnal Meeting of this Union in that town to a future period." It was further resolved, "That a special general Meeting of the Union be held in London, in the month of January, 1857, for the consideration of important business."

At the same committee the following resolution was moved by the Rev. S. McAll, of Nottingham, and was seconded by Rev. John Kennedy, M.A., of Stepney—

"That various charges of unfaithfulness to the sacred principles of evangelical truth having recently been made against the body of Congregational ministers, this meeting deem it incumbent

to express their deep and deliberate conviction that such imputations are unfounded and unjust ; and they hereby record their assurance that the ministers of our churches as a body maintain an unabated attachment to those great Christian principles on which they have been incorporated from the time of their formation ; but, while the meeting would earnestly commend a faithful adherence to the essential truths of the Gospel, and a prominent and unmistakable exhibition of them in the pulpit, they would earnestly desire that a charitable construction should be put upon the terms in which they are expressed, and that they should on all occasions be maintained and vindicated in a Christian Spirit."

The Rev. George Smith, in his historic retrospect of the Union, "pleaded only for a union which is in full accordance with the sacred rights of individuals and the perfect independency of churches ; for such union as Goodwin, Ames, and Owen, the venerable champions of Independency, advocated in the seventeenth century, and which the Churches of New England have from the beginning maintained. More than this is not wanted or desired ; but this is needful to collect the forces required for the wants and benefits of the age, for the defence of the common cause of truth and purity, and for the advancement of a kingdom confided to us as much for propagation as for enjoyment."

It did seem, therefore, to many of the foremost ministers and laymen, a cruel shame to jeopardise the character, influence, and work of the Union, having such high aims and purposes, by excited quibblings about mere words and phrases.

THE AUTUMNAL MEETING POSTPONED TILL JANUARY.

The Special Meeting of the Union was held at New Broad Street Chapel, January 20th and 21st, 1857, when the Chairman, Rev. John Stoughton, delivered an address on "Improvements in Congregationalism." It was a manly and noble deliverance respecting some of the perils which confronted the Union. He said: "Let it go forth from this meeting to the world that the churches and pastors composing the Congregational Union do not consist of two parties, one of which is contending *against* evangelical truth, and the other *for* it." After pointing out some of the perils that then threatened to hinder and injure, he said: "God grant that we may soon, even today, get rid of all vexatious questions, so that whatever battles there may be without, each future meeting of the Union may

be a harbour of peace, into which every brother may come for relief and comfort and holy strengthening." The whole address was most timely and appropriate, and made a profound and harmonizing impression on the whole Assembly. It is only fair to say that Dr. Campbell responded to its appeal in the same loyal and pacific spirit, saying: "Let persons and parties be altogether ignored. The watchword ought to be, 'Let the Union flourish; let the Denomination prosper;' and 'let the Gospel advance.'"

The discussion of the questions brought before the Union was earnest but temperate. A feeling of serious responsibility inspired all speakers. There was distinctly manifested a gratifying proof that this Union formed on a voluntary principle—formed on a basis of common faith and order—had within it elements of cohesion that no strain of conflicting discussion could sever. Those who feared disruption were happily disappointed. Lessons of experience were gained. Difficulties were removed which threatened to disturb the peace of the Denomination. The "Rivulet Controversy," which had been so lacking in moral dignity as well as honest and impartial inquiry after truth, resulted in closer bonds of brotherhood, and in a firmer and more practical consolidation of the Union itself.

The discussion respecting the state of religious opinion among the ministers and churches of the denomination happily terminated in a resolution moved by the Rev. J. B. Paton, M.A., seconded by Rev. W. Guest, as follows:—

"That this Assembly deliberately and explicitly adopts as its own a resolution passed at a conference summoned by the Committee of the Congregational Union, and held in this metropolis in the month of September last."

This was the resolution moved by Rev. S. McAll, and seconded by Rev. John Kennedy, M.A.

DEATH OF DR. HARRIS.

The Union lost a true friend by the death of the Rev. John Harris, D.D., on December 21, 1856. He had taken an active interest in the affairs of the Union. He had presided over its deliberations with great grace and wisdom. His address on "Devotional Habit," at the Annual Assembly last May had made a profound impression on all who listened to it. He was greatly revered for his wisely moderate counsels, and for his loving and forbearing spirit. As the first President of New College, his position was one of commanding influence and im-

portance. His literary productions, as well as his ministerial and professorial duties, had made him well known and had given him considerable popularity. The non-production of his Memoir, and his work entitled, "Theocracy," which he left nearly ready for the press, is a serious loss to the Denomination, and to theological literature. Those who have read "The Great Teacher," "The Great Commission," "Pre-Adamite Earth," "Man Primeval," and "Patriarchy," would like also to read his "Theocracy," as well as his "Memoir." Who possesses his manuscripts? Who is responsible for their non-publication? Surely it is time that this conspiracy of silence should cease.

THE REV. ARCHIBALD JACK AND THE MEETINGS OF 1857.

The Annual Assembly of the Union was held in New Broad Street Chapel on Tuesday, May 12th, 1857, when the Rev. Archibald Jack, of North Shields, presided. The subject of his address was, "The Unity of Congregational Churches." It was a compact and carefully argued discourse, the value of which was cordially acknowledged by the Assembly.

The Report of the Committee made special reference to the promised measure of the Government for the extinction of church-rates, and to the new law which came into force on the 1st of January for performing marriages in Dissenting chapels.

The Report of the Special Committee respecting the magazines was presented.

The Union adopted the recommendation of the Special Committee that it had appointed, for bringing about a reconciliation between the opposing parties, in the following resolution :—

THE MAGAZINES SEPARATED FROM THE UNION.

"That this Assembly, having adopted the Report of the Special Committee, whereby the future management of the magazines will be separated from the Congregational Union, and be committed to a body of trustees, embraces the present as a fitting opportunity to place on record their expression of thankfulness to the Rev. Dr. Campbell, their editor, for the lengthened, earnest, and efficient service he has rendered in that capacity." Thus the long and troublesome contest about publications terminated, and the Union was again free for the more earnest prosecution of its proper work.

The Autumnal Meeting was held at Cheltenham. On October

13th, 1857, the Chairman, the Rev. A. Jack, delivered an address on "The Present Condition of our Churches." It was, like his other address, a faithful, heart-searching, and timely discourse.

The Rev. George Smith advocated, with great force of argument and appeal, a *Supplementary Fund for the Support of the Ministry*, but it was deferred for further consideration. The Rev. Newman Hall spoke on "The Methods of Preaching the Gospel best adapted to the Age."

The Rev. John Stoughton charmed the Assembly by an address on "The Pen, the Palm, and the Pulpit; or, Tyndale, Hooper, and Whitfield." These three worthies—the Author, the Sufferer, and the Preacher—belonged to the county of Gloucester, in which the Assembly met.

THE AFFILIATED SOCIETIES SEPARATED FROM THE UNION.

Having removed the magazines from its formal connection and direct management, the Union now proceeded to deal with "The Affiliated Societies" in a similar way. Among the Societies thus dealt with were the British Missions, which included the Colonial Missionary Society, the Home Missionary Society, and the Irish Evangelical Society. The Special Committee on these Societies presented their final report, in which they recommended to the Autumnal Meeting, with the concurrence of the Committees of British Missions and of the Board of Education:

1. "To alter the formal connection of these Societies with the Congregational Union, by terminating the arrangement which places their officers as *ex officio* members on the Committee of the Union, and the officers of the Union as such on the Committees of the Societies; and by releasing the British Mission, the Board of Education, the English Congregational Chapel Building Society, and the Pastors' Insurance Aid Society, from all obligation to present any statement or report of their proceedings to any meeting of the Union.

2. "That these institutions having been originated or fostered by the Union, which will still take an interest in their welfare, as the recognised organisations of the Congregational denomination in England and Wales, the Committee of the Union be instructed to arrange, from time to time, for each of these societies to make, through their officers or others, such statements of their condition and prospects as may be likely to be of use to them, and of interest to the members of the Union,

and that in order to facilitate the action of the societies, and the attendance of the members of the denomination at the annual and autumnal meetings of the Union, the committee be directed to promote arrangements by which meetings of these societies shall be held in the same week as the assembly of the Union.

3. "That in relation to any organisations which the Union may in future originate, the same principle be recognised—that such societies, if formed, stand in a friendly relation only to the Union, not being subject, in any degree, to legislative control or official interference."

This recommendation of the Special Committee involved a complete change of the Union's action and policy in relation to societies. By thus freeing itself, the Union became essentially an advisory Council—a Council for the discussion of great religious and social questions—a Council for the advocacy of our ecclesiastical polity, principles and rights.

Moved by Samuel Morley, Esq., seconded by Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., and, after a lengthened and amicable discussion, the Assembly unanimously adopted the following resolution:—

"That the Report now read be approved, and that the recommendation therein contained be adopted, 'to alter the formal connection of the Affiliated Societies with the Congregational Union,' while the best thanks of the Assembly are hereby presented to the gentlemen of the Special Committee for the attention they have given to this subject."

The Rev. Thomas Aveling set forth the needs and claims of "Chapel Extension" in a very interesting and suggestive paper.

CONGRATULATORY RESOLUTION ON THE RESTORATION OF HARMONY.

The spirit of union and love during the Assembly at Cheltenham, prompted Rev. Dr. Campbell to move the following resolution, which was unanimously adopted:—

"That this Assembly cannot separate without placing on record the expression of its devout thankfulness to the God of love and peace, for the hallowed, united, and fervent spirit which He has graciously poured out on His servants assembled at this the eighteenth Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union." This was an appropriate epitaph for the now buried bone of contention that had for some time disturbed the equanimity of brethren.

Thus ended this interesting and memorable meeting of the Union, its members rejoicing at the successful and satisfactory issue of the controversies and trials through which it had recently passed, and praying that peace and harmony may evermore prevail in their Assemblies.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF DR. ALLIOTT.

The Rev. Richard Alliot, LL.D., Principal of Cheshunt College, was Chairman of the Congregational Union during 1858. He came to the duties and honours of his position amid serener conditions than some of his predecessors. He appropriately and learnedly discoursed in his address, May 11th, on "The New Theology," for which he was cordially thanked by the Assembly, in a resolution which describes his Address as "instructive and valuable."

THE COMMITTEE'S REFERENCE TO PAST DIFFICULTIES.

The Annual Report began with a retrospective reference to past difficulties and with grateful acknowledgements for the settlement of disquieting differences, as follows :—"It is with emotions of devout thankfulness to the God of truth and love that your Committee meet you on this occasion, and present to you the Annual Report of the proceedings of your Union. During the last two or three years it has been called to pass through a severe ordeal, and those who have had the management of its affairs have felt the need of that meekness and wisdom which the great Head of the Church alone could bestow, so as to keep them from compromising, in any degree, the sacred interests involved in the preservation and efficient working of the Union. In their season of perplexity, while they looked heavenward for Divine direction, they appealed to you for counsel and sympathy, and not in vain; and now that it has graciously pleased the Lord and Saviour of the body to extricate our fellowship from the difficulties in which it was reluctantly involved, they thankfully acknowledge the forbearance of their brethren, and venture earnestly to hope that the things which have happened will turn out rather to the furtherance of the Gospel. Facts, well known previously amongst ourselves, are now made patent to the whole Church and to the world; it is now understood that the strong attachment to evangelical truth which has ever marked the Congregational body of this country remains undiminished, and that no diversity of judgment on minor passing events need interfere with the cordial affection and co-

operation which should mark churches or individuals holding the principles which we hold, and which, we believe, are drawn from the inspired fountain of sacred truth."

THE NEW CONGREGATIONAL HYMN BOOK.

A copy of the "New Congregational Hymn Book," in the compilation of which a committee had been engaged for three years, was presented to the Chairman. The edition then printed was "intended to be open to observation and to elicit candid criticism." It would afterwards undergo a final revision, and would then be published in various editions. It was welcomed by the churches as an immense improvement on the old "Congregational Hymn Book."

IRELAND AS A MISSION FIELD.

The Rev. A. M. Henderson, of Claremont Chapel, read a very interesting paper on "Ireland as a Field for Congregational Missions." Intimate acquaintance with Ireland, and a thorough knowledge of the state of religion in that country, enabled him to make out a strong case for more earnest effort and for more liberal support. Mr. Henderson spoke with the energy and fire of enthusiastic patriotism.

THE AMERICAN REVIVAL.

The accounts that had recently reached this country respecting a great revival of religion in the United States of America were arousing among ministers and churches intensest interest. The fact that thousands of men of business in the chief commercial cities of the United States turned aside daily from their avocations of trade and prospects of worldly gain, to unite in prayer for their salvation and for that of others, was a religious phenomenon so striking as to call for and obtain the special and thoughtful consideration of the Congregational Union. It was arranged, therefore, that the whole of the Friday session should be devoted to the consideration of revivals in America. The subject was introduced by Mr. Charles Reed, who read a paper which he had prepared at the request of the Committee. This was followed by another paper on the same subject, prepared and read to the Assembly by Rev. J. A. James. It was a most gracious time of spiritual refreshing from the presence of the Lord. After singing, prayer was offered by the Rev. Samuel Martin, that prayer being accompanied with marvellous unction and spiritual power. On the motion of the

Rev. J. C. Harrison and the Rev. Samuel McAll, "the best thanks of the Assembly were presented to Mr. Charles Reed and to the Rev. J. A. James for their valuable papers . . . and they were requested to place them at the disposal of the Committee for immediate publication."

It was felt, however, by many that some further action should be taken with a view to promote a revival of religion among the churches and the people. The following resolution was unanimously adopted, on the motion of the Rev. Dr. Brown, of Cheltenham, seconded by E. Ball, Esq., M.P. :—

"That it be a recommendation from this Assembly to the pastors of our churches to direct attention from the pulpit, on the first Lord's Day in June, to the importance of a revival of religion, and that special meetings for prayer be held on the following day to entreat the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on our schools and colleges, on our pastors and churches, throughout the land."

AUTUMNAL MEETING AT HALIFAX.

The Autumnal Meeting of the Congregational Union was held at Halifax, Yorkshire. In full sympathy with the spiritual fervour awakened at the closing session in May, Dr. Alliot, as Chairman, took for the subject of his address "Religious Revivals." Whilst pointing out many mistakes in reference to revivals, he urged ministers and members of churches to seek, by earnest prayer and suitable preaching, the conversion of souls and a revival of spiritual life.

THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF WALES.

"The Congregational Churches of Wales" was the subject of a deeply interesting address by the Rev. Thomas Rees, of Beaufort, Monmouthshire. The following resolution, moved by Thomas Barnes, Esq., and seconded by Rev. Alexander Thomson, M.A., was adopted with acclamation :—

"That this Assembly has heard with much satisfaction the paper now read by the Rev. Thomas Rees in relation to the Congregational Churches of Wales, and requests its publication under the direction of the Committee, in the hope and expectation that it will increase in our English churches the interest they now feel in the prosperity of the churches of our faith and order in the Principality."

This essay, thus commended, had the effect of diffusing much light and creating much interest respecting the religious needs

of Wales, and respecting the religious work of the Congregational Churches in Wales.

PASTORS' RETIRING FUND.

The Rev. Dr. Ferguson, of Ryde, read an address, which he had prepared at the request of the Committee, on the importance of raising a fund to assist aged pastors in retiring from their pastorates. Dr. Ferguson sketched, in a clear and impressive manner, the scheme which afterwards resulted in "The Pastors' Retiring Fund." The Assembly was so deeply impressed by Dr. Ferguson's address that they immediately and unanimously passed the following resolution, moved by Rev. D. E. Ford and seconded by Charles Jupe, Esq. :—

"That this Assembly thankfully expresses its obligation to the Rev. Dr. Ferguson for the attention he has bestowed on the subject of making suitable provision to aid our aged pastors in retiring from the full work of the ministry ; hereby records its deliberate opinion of the desirableness, alike for the pastors and the churches, of forming a fund for the accomplishment of this important object ; and that it be referred to a committee to nominate and bring up on Thursday morning the names of a Special Committee to form and mature a plan for such an institution, to be presented for adoption at the next Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union."

DR. HALLEY ON OLIVER HEYWOOD, &c.

Dr. Halley delighted and instructed the Assembly by an eloquent address "On the history of the Rev. Oliver Heywood, and of Nonconformity on the borders of York and Lancaster," The Doctor occupied two hours in the delivery of his deeply interesting address.

THE REV. J. H. WILSON AND THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The Home Missionary Society underwent some revision, during the year, with a view to its invigoration and extension. The Rev. J. H. Wilson, of Aberdeen, was appointed Secretary of the Society.

Some of the fathers in the denomination were removed by death.

DEATH OF DR. HENDERSON.

The Rev. Ebenezer Henderson, D.D., died in his seventy-fourth year, on the Sabbath morning of May 6th, 1858. He had

been Theological tutor of Highbury College for nineteen years, and retired from his Professorship on the amalgamation of Highbury, Hoxton, and Coward Colleges in New College, St. John's Wood. His enlightened piety, his varied erudition, his extensive Oriental scholarship, his vast stores of knowledge gathered from many sources in many lands, endeared him, not only to his own denomination, of which he was so bright an ornament, but to the church of Christ at large, to whom he had become so well known by his various publications and his unwearied efforts to promote the kingdom of Christ. "Though dead, he still speaketh" through the press, in his various works, especially in his "Biblical Researches in Russia," in his lectures on "Divine Inspiration," in his "Defence of the Great Mystery of Godliness," in his "Editorial Comments on Barnes' Notes on the Scriptures, and Moses Stuart's work on the Romans," and in his "Critical Commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekial, and the Minor Prophets."

DEATH OF DR. JENKYN.

The Rev. T. W. Jenkyn, D.D., sank into the arms of death on Wednesday, May 26th, 1858, in the sixty-third year of his age and the fortieth of his public ministry. He was the author of a work on the "Extent of the Atonement," and of another work "On the Union of the Holy Spirit and the Church in the Conversion of the World." By these works he acquired both literary and theological celebrity; and they led to his being appointed to the Theological Chair, and eventually to the Presidency of Coward College. When Coward College was amalgamated with Highbury and Homerton Colleges in 1850 to form New College, Dr. Jenkyn's services were no longer required. Being anxious still to do good, he went to Rochester to establish a new interest in that city, and after a short visit to America he returned and laboured there to his dying day.

DEATH OF DR. PHILIP.

The Rev. Robert Philip, D.D., minister of Maberly Chapel, Kingsland, London, died on the 1st of May, 1858, in the sixty-seventh year of his age. He was for thirty years pastor of Maberly Church. During that time he was indefatigable in the discharge of his pastoral duties, although he was such a voluminous writer. His pen was never idle. Among the numerous works he then produced, a series of small volumes, separately issued under the name of "Guides," obtained a very large circu-

lation. Another series, published under the collective title of the "Young Man's Closet Library," was received with equal favour both in England and America. A series of works on "The Marys," "The Marthas," and "The Lydias," were published collectively as the "Lady's Closet Library." He published, also, a series of lectures forming a sequel to the "Guides," in one volume, under the title of "The Eternal ; or the Attributes of Jehovah." His biographical works were : "The Life of Bunyan," "The Life and Times of Whitefield," "The Life of Dr. Milne, of China," "The Life and Times of the Rev. John Campbell," and "The Elijah of South Africa." "The Comforter ; or the Love of the Spirit" must not be omitted from this list, as it was perhaps his earliest published work. His statements of truth are clear, terse, and vigorous ; his arguments and appeals are convincing and solemn ; a spirit of deep earnestness and high-toned piety pervades all his writings. Thousands of readers thank God for the help his works have afforded them.

DEATH OF PROFESSOR WALTER SCOTT.

The Rev. Walter Scott was summoned to his eternal reward on the 13th of September, 1858. He died somewhat suddenly in the house of his son, at Manchester, in the seventy-ninth year of his age and the fortysixth of his ministry. He was called to the Theological Chair of Airedale College, Bradford, in 1834. He conjoined to his presidential duties the pastorship of a newly-formed church, at first intended to stand in close relation to the institution of which he was the head, and hence called "College Chapel." The connection between the college and the chapel was soon dissolved ; but Mr. Scott continued his pastorship over the church till nearly the time of his decease. He did not often speak to the public through the press ; but the series of Congregational Lectures is indebted to him for one of its most interesting volumes, entitled "The Agency of Evil Spirits." He was the second of his name who had written on that theme. Mr. Scott treated this very difficult subject with much acuteness and intelligence, bringing large stores of varied knowledge to illustrate and inform his work.

DEATH OF DR. STOWELL.

The Rev. W. H. Stowell, D.D., died at his residence, Roman Road, Barnsbury, on January 2nd, 1858, after a brief illness, in the fifty-eighth year of his age, and thirty-seventh of his ministry. In 1833 he accepted the presidency of the Indepen-

dent College at Rotherham, and the pastorate of the church at Masborough. These offices he filled till 1850, when he accepted an invitation to the presidency of Cheshunt College, from which he retired about a year and a half before his death.

The published works of Dr. Stowell show that his scholarship was extensive and varied, and that he was a good classic and an able theologian. His work on the Decalogue, published soon after the commencement of his ministry at North Shields, manifests an extensive acquaintance with ethics and moral philosophy. In 1849 he published an able treatise on "The Work of the Holy Spirit." This treatise consisted of lectures delivered in the Congregational Library, London, at the request of the promoters of what is called "The Congregational Lecture." It was immediately after the publication of his "Congregational Lecture" that he received the degree of D.D. from the University of Glasgow. He was, at one time, joint-editor of the *Eclectic Review*. He was a frequent contributor to the periodical press.

The decease of four learned divines, who had been presidents of theological Colleges, in one year, was a remarkable occurrence. The biographical notices in the Year Book of Ministers deceased, from November, 1857 to November, 1858, reached the extraordinary number of fifty-two.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF DR. LEGGE.

The Rev. George Legge, LL.D., of Leicester, was Chairman of the Congregational Union for 1859. The subject on which he addressed the Assembly was, as he describes it, "The object of Christianity and the Mission of the Church—its mission in the ages gone by, and the peculiarity of its mission in the age in which we live." He said "no theme could be more apposite to such an occasion as this than the subject-matter of our Divine religion, with the duty which devolves particularly on our section of the Church—not less holy, apostolic, or catholic, I would fain persuade myself, than any other." This interesting subject he treated in a masterly manner; and for his "excellent and appropriate address" he was cordially thanked by the Assembly.

LOYALTY TO OUR PRINCIPLES AND POLITY.

A very striking passage occurs in the Report. It says:—"Your Committee would earnestly enjoin on themselves and on their brethren the importance of a devotional adherence to

our recognised theology, and an earnest, loving attachment to our ecclesiastical polity. We are witnesses for great truths, and should be laborious in our endeavours to diffuse them. They are intimately connected with the purity and spirituality of the Churches, the honour of our adorable Redeemer, and the spread of His kingdom in the earth. They are inimical to the idea of political power accorded to the Church for its support, believing that its influence is to be extended, not by human might, but by the spirit of the Lord." The Report concludes with a quotation of singular appropriateness and beauty from "an eloquent writer," whose name is not given :—"The ark of God was never taken till it was surrounded by the arms of earthly defenders. In captivity, its sanctity was sufficient to vindicate it from insult and to lay the hostile fiend prostrate on the threshold of its own temple. The real security of Christianity is to be found in its benevolent morality, in its exquisite adaptation to the human heart, in the facility with which it adapts itself to the capacity of every human intellect, in the consolation which it bears to the house of mourning, in the light with which it brightens the great mystery of the grave. To such a system it can bring no addition of dignity or strength that it is part and parcel of the common law. The whole history of the Christian religion shows that it is in far greater danger of being corrupted by the alliance of power than of being crushed by its opposition."

FIRST APPEARANCE OF DR. HANNAY AT THE UNION.

The Rev. A. Hannay appeared on the platform of the Congregational Union of England and Wales for the first time. The resolution which Rev. John Alexander proposed, and which Rev. J. C. Harrison seconded explains his object or mission thus :—

"That this Assembly cordially welcomes the Rev. A. Hannay, of Dundee, as the representative of the Congregational Union of Scotland, and hopes that the pleasant and profitable interchange of deputations which has been hitherto enjoyed between the English and Scottish Unions, will long continue to be maintained for the mutual advantage of the Congregational Churches in both parts of the British Empire."

OFFER OF £1,000 TO THE PASTORS' RETIRING FUND.

The scheme for the Pastors' Retiring Fund which Dr. Ferguson had so ably advocated was greatly advanced by the

generous offer of the Rev. J. Angell James to give £1,000 for forming such a fund. A resolution moved by Dr. Vaughan and seconded by the Rev. Josiah Bull, M.A., was adopted as follows :—

“That this Assembly having by the generous offer of £1,000 by the Rev. J. A. James had its attention directed to the importance of forming a fund to enable aged ministers to retire when incapacitated for discharging the duties of the pastorate is of opinion that immediate steps should be taken to raise a further sum of not less than £4,000 to constitute the basis of such an institution ; and directs that it be referred to the Committee appointed at Halifax to carry the object into effect and to agree upon the necessary details.”

INDIA, CHINA, AND JAPAN.

The changed relations of our country towards India, China, and Japan were at that time engaging public attention and interest. A resolution on that subject was brought forward and carried, on the motion of the Rev. James Hill, seconded by the Rev. Dr. James Legge, from China :—

“That this Assembly regards with satisfaction and devout thankfulness to God, the subjection of India to the benignant sway of her Majesty, and the restoration of peace amongst the numerous tribes of that land ; that it hails with gratitude the enlarged openings for the labours of Christian missionaries in India and China, and the probable facilities for diffusing the Gospel in Japan ; and it heartily sympathises with the London Missionary and other societies in their increasingly vigorous efforts for the diffusion of Divine truth in those populous and benighted regions.”

THE AUTUMNAL ADDRESS OF DR. LEGGE.

The subject of Dr. Legge's second Address delivered at the Autumnal Meeting of the Union at Aberdare, September 12th, was “God's Providence in relation to His Church.” It was a noble theme, and it was nobly treated. The Assembly's resolution of thankful indebtedness very appropriately described it as “the most valuable, comprehensive, and suggestive address,” and declared that its publication would be “of essential service to the cause of sound learning, evangelical truth and Christian liberty.”

FIRST VISIT OF THE UNION TO WALES.

A special interest attached to this Autumnal Meeting, as it was the first time the Union had visited Wales. Its first

session was held in the Temperance Hall, Aberdare. An appreciative and grateful resolution was moved by the Rev. Henry Batchelor, seconded by Rev. W. Rose, as follows :—

“That this Assembly, on occasion of the first Meeting of the Congregational Union in Wales, cheerfully embraces the opportunity of placing on record its conviction that the Independent Churches of this Principality have been greatly honoured by our adorable Saviour in diffusing His truth, by the faithful preaching of the Gospel and the instruction of the people in their vernacular language, and in promoting His glory by a well-adapted instrumentality in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers ; it begs to assure them of the holy sympathy and affectionate interest with which their affairs have ever been regarded by the English churches of the Congregational Order ; and it further expresses a confident hope that in the changes gradually passing over the country by the wider diffusion of knowledge, and the extending prevalence of the English language, they will be enabled, under the grace and benediction of the Holy Spirit, to maintain the honourable position they have so long held amongst the Evangelical Denominations of Christians in this land.” This was a well-merited tribute of honourable recognition by the Congregational Union of the work and worth of the Welsh Congregational Churches.

Among the subjects discussed were the Pastors' Retiring Fund, Church Meetings, Chapel-building, American Slavery, Bible Monopoly, Congregational Principles, Religious Revivals, Sunday Schools, and Baptized Children.

FIRST APPEARANCE OF REV. J. H. WILSON AS SECRETARY TO THE HOME MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The Rev. J. H. Wilson made his first appearance on the platform of the Union as Secretary of the Home Missionary Society. He moved a resolution respecting the work of County Associations, which Samuel Morley, Esq. seconded, in the following terms :—

“That in the judgment of this assembly, many of the Congregational County Associations of England are capable of great improvement and require a careful revision of their plans and modes of operation to enable them to put forth appropriate efforts adequately to support the existing ministry, and to

extend the Gospel more effectually within their own bounds ; that the proposals of the Home Missionary Society for future labours with the counties in an affiliated capacity appear to be judicious, and suited to the contemplated end ; and that the pastors or other brethren here assembled entreat the hearty co-operation of the officers and committees of the County Associations with the Home Missionary Society in the revived and extended efforts it now wishes to put forth for the evangelisation of the towns and villages of the country."

This resolution shows with what enthusiasm and vigour Mr. Wilson threw himself into the work of the Home Missionary Society.

DEATH OF REV. JOHN ANGELL JAMES.

The Congregational Union sustained a great loss by the death of the Rev. John Angell James on October 1st, 1859, in the seventy-fourth year of his age and the fifty-fourth year of his ministry. The death of this "good minister of Jesus Christ" made a profound impression, not only in his own denomination, but on all other religious communities, for his "praise was in all the churches." Wherever the English language was spoken his name was a "household word." His spoken words, through the Divine blessing, thrilled, subdued, and converted many ; but who shall number the souls urged "to flee from the wrath to come" through his winged words ? His "Anxious Inquirer" gives not only perpetuity to his name, but also to his power of doing good by leading seeking souls to the Saviour. The writer of these words can never cease to thank God for the wise and efficient guidance he found in that precious book when he was an anxious inquirer. Whatever may be the fate of his other writings, his "Anxious Inquirer" will continue to be a household book to the Church of God. Like Baxter's "Call," Alleine's "Alarm," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," and Bunyan's "Pilgrim," it will continue to sow the seeds of faith and hope, truth and holiness, in all coming time. One of the last of Mr. James' deeds of benevolence was the gift of £1,000 to establish a fund—now known as "The Pastors' Retiring Fund"—to enable aged pastors to resign their charges when age and infirmity should disqualify them for efficient service. His much-esteemed colleague and successor, the Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., enriched the biographical literature of the Christian Church by his "Life and Letters of John Angell James."

CHAIRMAN FOR 1860.

The Rev. JAMES HILL, of Clapham, was the Chairman of the Congregational Union for 1860. While some of his predecessors had distinguished themselves for the length of their Addresses, he deserves distinction for the shortness of his. His subject was "Divine Influence," closing with a touching reference to the decease of the Rev. John Angell James. The Union commenced its Sessions in Poultry Chapel on May 7th. At the various Sessions it was occupied in considering Pastors' Retiring Fund; New South Wales; Church Rates; Chapel Trusts; Registration of Chapels; The Census of 1861; Congregational School, Lewisham; Irish Revivals; Special Prayer for Missions, in the first week of January, 1861. The dinner was provided at Radley's, Blackfriars.

THE AUTUMNAL MEETING OF THE UNION WAS AT BLACKBURN, and its first Session was held in the Rev. A. Fraser's Chapel, Tuesday, September 25th, 1860. The subject of the Chairman's Address was "The Aggressive Character of the Christian Religion," and it showed the expansive aggressiveness of Christianity at the various periods of the Christian Church.

Dr. Ferguson, greatly encouraged in his efforts to found a Pastors' Retiring Fund, again presented its claims for the consideration of the Union, and boldly asked for "nothing short of" £100,000.

The Rev. John Kelly delivered a very noteworthy address on "Denominational Principles."

The Session on Wednesday, September 26th, was held at the Rev. W. H. Mann's newly-erected chapel, Mill Hill, Blackburn. Mr. Mann has been, during the last 28 years, the greatly esteemed Congregational Bishop of Durban, Natal, South Africa. His appearance and his address at the International Conference of Congregational Churches were welcomed with much enthusiasm. At this Session the Rev. J. H. Wilson and Samuel Morley, Esq., introduced a resolution on intemperance, which was cordially adopted.

The Rev. H. J. Gamble, of Clapton, gave an interesting account of Irish Revivals.

The Rev. Dr. Spence read an earnest paper on "Revivals in England."

The Thursday Session was held in James Street Chapel. The Rev. J. C. Gallaway read a paper on the progress made in chapel-building during the last ten years.

Mr. Charles Reed brought before the Union the claims of the Sunday School as a Church institution. This was an elaborate well-thought-out paper on a most important subject, and it bore much valuable fruit in aftertime.

CONGREGATIONAL PSALMODY.

A very valuable paper was read on "Congregational Psalmody" by the Rev. H. M. Gunn. This subject was introduced at the solicitation of the Wilts and East Somerset Congregational Union. The points submitted for consideration were, "Whether psalmody is rightly regarded by Congregations as a part of their worship;" "What are the principles on which psalmody ought to be composed for Congregational use;" "What style of psalmody has been proved by experience to be best adapted for public worship;" "What can be done to improve the psalmody in any Congregation."

Samuel Morley, Esq., and Joshua Wilson, Esq., introduced a discussion on "Evangelists for England." After considerable and earnest discussion, the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"That the letter now read from Joshua Wilson, Esq., be printed by the Home Missionary Society, and sent to county associations for their earnest and prayerful consideration; and that, if approved, measures may be immediately adopted for carrying its recommendations into effect."

Several public meetings were held for the advocacy of Congregational Principles, Foreign Missions, and Voluntary Education. All the meetings were characterised by a devout spirit and great enthusiasm. The delegates returned to their homes thankful to God for the peace and happiness they had been permitted to enjoy during their sojourn in Blackburn.

DEATH OF DR. REDFORD.

The Rev. George Redford, D.D., LL.D., one of the foremost founders of the Congregational Union, passed away to the heavenly home, May 13th, 1860. He was seventy-four years of age when he died, and he had been in the ministry forty-eight years. His first pastorate was at Uxbridge, where he spent fourteen happy and useful years. In 1826 he accepted the pastorate of the Congregational Church at Worcester. For thirty years he remained the faithful and affectionate pastor of an undivided and harmonious church. His literary labours were considerable. His Congregational lectures, as

well as many other works, attest his learning, research, intellectual and logical power, and his supreme desire to promote truth, liberty, and salvation. The celebrated "Declaration of the Faith, Church Order, and Discipline of the Congregationalists or Independents," adopted by the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in 1833, as the basis of its fellowship, was the production of his pen. He resigned his charge in 1856, on account of enfeebled health, and retired to Edgbaston, Birmingham, to be near his beloved friend, the Rev. John Angell James. On his retirement, his church secured for him an annuity of £100 per annum. The end came suddenly; but the good soldier of Jesus Christ was ready for the summons to the presence of his Lord.

CHAIRMANSHIP OF REV. J. G. MIALL.

During the year of 1861, the Chair of the Congregational Union was occupied with ability and dignity by the Rev. J. G. Miall of Bradford. The excellent Address that he delivered on Tuesday May 7th in Falcon Square Chapel was mainly devoted to a review of "The Principles and Practices of other Denominations."

An exceedingly able Report was presented to the Assembly on recent Romish encroachments. It was impossible for the Congregational Union entirely to overlook the position and aims of the Roman Catholic community, inasmuch as many of their recent efforts had worn a menacing aspect, not only to Protestant truth, but also to religious freedom. While disclaiming any desire to call forth a violent and unfounded "No Popery" cry, the Union took this opportunity to show that, as Protestant Dissenters, they had not been unconcerned spectators of the many aggressive movements of the Papal party in Great Britain and its various dependencies.

THE REVISION OF RULE V. OF THE CONSTITUTION.

The Rev. R. Ashton proposed an additional clause to the fifth rule of the constitution of the Union to the effect that the Committee of the Union shall consist of Ministers or laymen, being members of such Congregational churches as are eligible for connection with the Union, and being subscribers to its funds, either personally or through the churches of which they are ministers or members; the trustees, treasurer, and secretaries shall be members *ex officio*. The motion was seconded by Rev. R. Macbeth and carried.

The AUTUMNAL ASSEMBLY of the Union was held in Ebenezer Chapel, Steelhouse Lane, Birmingham. The subject of the Chairman's address was a "Review of the Union." It was a most instructive survey of the workings of our principles and polity.

BICENTENARY OF THE EJECTMENT.

Joshua Wilson, Esq., of Tunbridge Wells, at the request of the Committee, had prepared a paper of suggestions respecting the best mode of celebrating the Black Bartholomew Day; but the state of his health not allowing him either to undertake so long a journey or bear the excitement of reading the document before the Assembly, it was read, with slight abbreviations, in his behalf by the Rev. R. Ashton. It was a grand preliminary trumpet-blast, full of practical recommendations. He recommended that fifty new chapels should be opened on or before the 24th of August, 1862. The foundation-stones of fifty more should be laid on that day. Vigorous measures should be adopted for diffusing the knowledge and extending the practical adoption of those principles which they avowed and advocated. Let us work the press, said Mr. Wilson, "as we have never done it, and scatter authentic information broadcast through the whole length and breadth of the land. Let the people of England know on what anti-Christian or sectarian foundation the ecclesiastical establishment in this country was reconstructed in 1662, and that it still rests on the same basis. An Act of Parliament, and *such an Act!* Let the infamous character of this Act and the base spirit in which it was framed, the base arts by which it was carried, the base purpose for which it was intended, be exposed to the public gaze in all their hideous deformity."

It was but natural that Meeting should give earnest expression to their feelings after the reading of such a paper. It was also fitting that the following resolution should be moved by such a brave and manly historian as Dr. Vaughan:—

"That this Assembly, in anticipation of the 24th day of August, 1662, the Bicentenary day of the ejectment of two thousand Ministers from their homes and livings as Ministers of Christ in the Church of England, under the stringent, inhuman, and unjust provisions of the Act of Uniformity, deems it a most suitable opportunity for commemorating the zeal, self-denial, and consistency of these noble men, to whom the Nonconformity of this and every subsequent age is, and will be,

indebted, and of magnifying the grace of God in their high conscientious attachment to religious truth and freedom; and would earnestly call on all the pastors and churches of the Congregational Order in England and Wales to make such provision for a due observance of the event as to them may appear desirable; not doubting that it will be deemed proper that sermons should be preached on the subject in all our places of worship; and recommending that efforts should be made in all the parishes or localities from which ministers were ejected to gather up such particulars of their histories as are likely to be instrumental in reviving the spirit they displayed; and that attempts be made by prompt and timely measures to originate new and additional chapels in the midst of large populations, to perpetuate the memory of men who, by their sufferings and zeal, secured to their descendants the liberties we so happily enjoy; and this Assembly instructs the Committee of the Congregational Union, in conjunction with the Committees of the London and English Congregational Chapel-Building Societies, to convene, at an early day, a Conference, with a view to decide on recommendations to carry this latter object into effect, and to adopt such other measures as may appear proper for the commemoration of Bartholomew's Day in the coming year." This resolution was seconded by the Rev. T. C. Hine, and rapturously adopted by the Assembly.

Other important addresses were delivered, papers read, and resolutions passed. This Autumnal Meeting was memorable for evangelical fervour, earnest loyalty to Congregational principles, and sympathetic interest in evangelistic efforts for the promotion of true religion in town and country.

DEATH OF DR. LEGGE.

The REV. G. LEGGE, LL.D., who discharged the duties of Chairman of the Congregational Union, with such distinguished ability, only two years ago, died on January 24th, 1861. He entered on his pastorate in Leicester in January, 1836. He was twenty-nine years in the Ministry. He published a volume of considerable merit on "Christianity in Harmony with Man's Nature, Present and Progressive." He also published several separate addresses and discourses. A posthumous volume of lectures was published on "Theology, Science, and Revelation." It is full of profound thinking. He was endowed with a strong intellect, a glowing imagination, a loving heart, a genial

nature, and great constancy of purpose. His character was strongly marked—bold and massive—enduring as the granite rocks of his native land.

CHAIRMAN FOR 1862.

The Rev. SAMUEL MARTIN, of Westminster Chapel, was Chairman of the Congregational Union for the memorable year of 1862. The subject on which he discoursed was "Church Life." He spoke on this theme with that pathetic and impressive eloquence for which he is so distinguished. He made a most touching reference to our good Queen's great bereavement in the following words :—"The present day is, in many respects, a day of gloom and thick darkness, and we specially need the brightness of the Saviour's face. The shadow of the angel of Death is upon the nation—the land mourneth—our beloved Queen sits in the desolation of a widow—and her children drink of the bitter cup of orphanage. The Princess Alice anticipates a marriage beneath the cypress, with every harp hung upon the willows, and every guest weighed down by sad memories." Referring to the ravages of death in the ranks of the Union he said, "Forty-five pastors have died since the meeting of the Union in last year, and several honoured laymen. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, our dead are not dead ; our dead are only in a trance, our dead but sleep, our dead are translated, our dead live ; John Reynolds is not dead ; John Muir, and Andrew Reed are not dead ; James Sherman is not dead ; Richard Fletcher is not dead ; Edward Swaine is not dead ; nor, are the dead far away. We occupy lower, and they higher apartments in our Father's house. We know that they are living, for our spirits feel them to be near, and, if we may not salute them, we will, by memory's power bring them down, and we will encompass ourselves with them as a cloud of witnesses."

He then thus briefly alluded to the special importance of the year :—"This year, 1862, is memorable as the Tricentenary of the Puritan Movement in the Convocation of 1562, in which an attempt was made to purify the service of the church from practices which fifty-eight members of Convocation out of 117 felt to be contrary to the Word of God ; and it is yet more memorable as the Bicentenary of the ejection of two thousand ministers from the Anglican Church by an Act of Uniformity, to which, as truthful and honest men, they could not submit.

Now, as every mouth is filled with this subject, and many pens are busy with it, we have not deemed it desirable to make it our chief topic to-day, especially as we understand that a paper will be read by the Secretary of 'The Bi-centenary Nonconformist Fund.' We hope that this course of action will not disappoint the Assembly."

After these preliminary observations, Mr. Martin proceeded to discuss "Church Life" under three aspects:—(1) The intended relation of Church life to individual religious life; (2) The adaptation of the Congregational form of Church life to sustain the above relation; and (3) The necessity in this country, and in our times, of a most devout and religious Nonconformity, so that a true Church type may be exhibited, and individual religious life be promoted by Church organisation and association.

In another part of his address he said: "The principles of Congregational Church polity, so far as we understand them, are (1) Personal responsibility in matters of religion. (2) Personal conviction as the basis of individual action. (3) Freedom from the control of men as spiritual masters and fathers. (4) Independence between distinct congregations; that is, 'so far as the right or power to interfere with the faith or discipline of any other church is concerned,' except 'to separate from such as in faith or practice depart from the Gospel of Christ.'"

The Annual Report contained a very suggestive reference to the BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION.

"The natural and not illaudable desire of the Independent Dissenters of the nineteenth century to do honour to the memory of their Puritan Nonconforming ancestors of the seventeenth century has been met by such opposition and misrepresentation in various quarters as to awaken surprise and regret. Our relation to these men has been questioned, though many of them on their ejection collected Congregational Churches who erected edifices for public worship which continue in our denomination to this day. We do not derive our origin from them; but they were the means of multiplying churches of our faith and order. As such we honour them; and, if their agreement with us had been far less perfect than it is, we should still have delighted to honour the memory of men who made great sacrifices for truth and righteousness, and who, though dead, continue to speak. As originating the Bicentenary Conference and promoting the objects of the

Bicentenary Fund, we are accused of aggressive action on the Church of England, and of promoting strife and alienation among Christian brethren. To this we plead not guilty, and refer with confidence to the publications and doings of the Bicentenary Committee for our justification. It is our aim to vindicate our own position as conscientious Dissenters, and not to judge our brethren ; it is ours to diffuse in a Christian spirit the belief of truths which are dear to us, not only because they were held by Owen and Howe, by Henry and Flavel, or even by men of an earlier age, but because we find them in the New Testament, the only authentic record of our Saviour's will. . . . We would have this commemorative year one of prayer as well as one of contribution and activity."

BICENTENARY COMMEMORATION COMMITTEE.

The Rev. J. Corbin, Secretary of this Committee, having read a report of the origin and work of the organisation, it was moved by the Rev. J. C. Harrison, and seconded by the Rev. John Kelly :—

"That this Assembly, in receiving the valuable report now read by the Secretary of the Bicentenary Committee, would express to them its cordial thanks for the efficient way in which they have carried into effect the resolutions of the Conference ; and while commending all the objects embraced by the Bicentenary Fund to the friends who compose our congregations, would especially urge the importance of a Memorial Hall in London as absolutely needed for the purposes of the denomination, and as an appropriate memorial of the ejected ministers of 1662."

The Central United St. Bartholomew Committee of Evangelical Nonconformists, embraced Baptists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians. It was formed at a meeting held in the Baptist Library, the Congregationalists present showing a strong feeling in favour of general co-operation. Although the two Committees acted apart, that of the Congregational Union agreed to unite in diffusing information, and to issue a memorial volume. Both Committees issued addresses. That of the Congregational body sketched the events that led to the ejection, denounced the Act of Uniformity, with its harsh and sectarian provisions, "as a disgrace to our National Church," and declared that Christianity should never have been an affair of State.

The Central United Committee stated that their commemoration did not require identity of ecclesiastical or theological faith between the Nonconformists of 1662 and 1862, for it was not the opinions but the conduct of the ejected that they desired to honour. They said it was "their heroic spirit, not their convictions—their fidelity to conscience, not their articles of belief—their unswerving loyalty to their spiritual King, not their ideas on questions of Church relations and Church government that commend them to attention, to sympathy, to imitation." This was very good so far, but it was also rather cautious.

The Congregational Committee resolved to promote district Conferences, the diffusion of information illustrative of British Nonconformity, special lectures and sermons on Bicentenary Sunday in August, as well as a Bicentenary Memorial Fund, with a view to the erection of a large number of new places of worship, and a large and commodious Memorial Hall. The agitation was kept up throughout the year. In nearly every town and village there were either sermons, lectures, public meetings, or discussions on the subject, so that the story of the two thousand was told in every conceivable form, and its lessons inculcated. There had never been before such widespread instruction on any ecclesiastical event or religious crisis; there had, indeed, never been before such powerful appeals to "the Nonconformist conscience." The Congregational Committee had a great meeting in St. James' Hall. At that meeting, Dr. Stoughton, Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Edmond, and Mr. Alfred Rooker delivered eloquent and soul-stirring addresses.

During May and June a course of lectures was delivered at Willis's Rooms, under the auspices of the United Committee, the Lecturers being Dr. McCrie (Presbyterian), Rev. A. McLaren (Baptist), and the Rev. R. W. Dale and Dr. Halley (Congregationalists). The United Committee published, also, a very noble and eloquent essay on "English Puritanism, by Mr. Peter Bayne, as an introduction to the very valuable historical documents they had brought out; while the Congregational Committee published the Memorial Volume of Dr. Vaughan, entitled "A History of English Nonconformity." The learned author of this important work dealt not only with the events connected with the passing of the Act of Uniformity, but, also, with the whole period of English Nonconformity, showing that throughout its history the State Church system has been disastrous to the Church of Christ.

St. Bartholomew's Day, which fell on Sunday, August 24th, was one of the most memorable religious commemorations in the history of our country. Nearly every minister of the several Nonconformist denominations delivered discourses on the subject. The *Nonconformist* newspaper contained references to upwards of three hundred and fifty sermons preached in more than a hundred and fifty towns, their general subject being a Scriptural justification of Nonconformity with regard to its present relations to the Established Church. This great demonstration received ample notice in the daily press; the *Times* leading the way with an elaborate and discriminating article, followed by the *Daily News* and the *Morning Star*, both of which expressed unqualified approval of the principles on which the movement was based. Copious extracts were given in the press from the sermons or lectures delivered by such eminent ministers as Dr. Vaughan, Dr. Raleigh, Dr. Angus, Dr. Stoughton, Dr. James Hamilton, Dr. J. R. Campbell, Dr. Binney, Dr. Halley, Dr. Kennedy, Dr. Mellor, Dr. Aveling, Revs. Edward White, J. G. Miall, T. T. Lynch, Mark Wilks, T. Adkins, A. M. Henderson, E. R. Conder, Paxton Hood, J. G. Rogers, R. W. Dale, W. H. Parkinson, S. Martin, and a host of others.

It was a happy and appropriate coincidence that the foundation-stone of the New Meeting House at Stepney was laid on the 5th of September, by Thomas Scrutton, Esq., in the presence of a large concourse of people. Dr. Kennedy, the pastor of the church, gave an eloquent and most interesting sketch of its history, tracing its commencement from a period eighteen years anterior to the Bartholomew rejection.

"On St. Bartholomew's Day sermons adapted to the occasion were preached all over the country. Harvest joys mingled with memories of men long before gathered into the Lord's garner. Thankful recollections of devout services that day, unembittered by political or party strife, continue to this hour. Wales, which had suffered much from the Act of Uniformity, now rejoiced in the freedom of religious worship possessed by children of the mountain and forest, the valley and the lake; and glad were they to hear the old story told, not in the tongue of the Saxon, but in the loved speech of their motherland. In Ireland, too, commemorations were held, and the sympathy reached our Canadian and Australian colonies." (Stoughton's "Religion in England," vol. 2, p. 415).

The AUTUMNAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION was held in the Rev.

T. Binney's Chapel, King's Weigh-house, Tuesday, October 7th, 1862. The theme on which the honoured Chairman discoursed was "The Church and the Nation ; or Conformity and Non-conformity." It was a masterly Address, and delivered with that solemn impressiveness so characteristic of the oratory of Samuel Martin. At the conclusion of the Address, the Assembly expressed its high appreciation of it in a somewhat unusual resolution. It was moved by Rev. John Kelly, seconded by Rev. Henry Ollard, and unanimously adopted :—

"That this Assembly, while presenting its respectful and grateful acknowledgements to its beloved and honoured Chairman, for his wise and suggestive Address now delivered from the chair, and requesting him to allow its publication with the Minutes of the Session, avails itself of this opportunity of placing on record its conviction of the valuable service he has rendered the Congregational Union by his presiding during the present memorable year in the annals of Nonconformity, and of devoutly recognising the grace which the adorable Lord and Head of the Church has conferred on him in his Christian and ministerial character and work."

A most interesting and satisfactory Report of the Bicentenary Celebrations was read by the Rev. J. Corbin. It was shown that some £130,000 had been contributed to the Bicentenary Fund, and sanguine hopes were expressed that the sum of £200,000 would be reached.

This report afforded subject and scope for several eloquent and stirring speeches. The following resolution relating thereto was moved by Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., seconded by Rev. S. Hebditch, and supported by Dr. Vaughan, Samuel Morley, Esq., and Rev. E. S. Prout, M.A. :—

"That this Assembly receives with emotions of peculiar satisfaction the Report now presented from the Bicentenary Committee respecting its proceedings ; rejoices in the large amount of information conveyed by the living voice, and through the press, in relation to the distinctive principles of Evangelical Nonconformity ; is gratified with the appropriate testimony which has been borne through the country to the enlightened conscientiousness of the ejected ministers of 1662 ; and we thankfully acknowledge the liberality displayed by the churches and congregations of the Independent denomination, with a view to strengthen and enlarge its various educational and evangelising institutions. At the same time, this Assembly would urge the importance of at once raising funds adequate to

the erection of a Memorial Hall in London, which is most urgently demanded by the necessities of the case, as now detailed by the second paper read, and which will prove, when erected, a suitable, visible, and permanent memorial of events intimately connected with the freedom and religion of this country in the present and future age."

There was a Bicentenary Soirée at Freemason's Hall in the evening of the same day. It was a grand meeting, and was presided over by Samuel Morley, Esq. After welcoming the visitors both from town and country, the Chairman introduced the Rev. John Stoughton, who read an interesting essay on "Lessons for Nonconformists." This most suggestive essay was prepared at the request of the Committee of the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Dr. Stoughton treated his subject with great force of argument and eloquence of description, arranging his "Lessons" around the following points:—

1. The discipline of circumstances.
2. The importance of ecclesiastical principles.
3. The reform and improvement of our Congregational system.

The Assembly expressed its cordial approbation and thanks for this excellent essay, on the motion of Dr. Halley and Rev. Henry Allon.

At the second Session, Wednesday, October 8th, 1862, the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., then of Ashton-under-Lyne, read a paper which he had prepared at the request of the Committee, on "Our Denominational Missions." On the motion of Dr. Brown and Rev. G. Wilkinson, the Assembly presented its best thanks to the Rev. J. G. Rogers, B.A., for his excellent paper, and asked him to allow its publication in such way as the Committee should approve.

PUBLIC BICENTENARY MEETING.

On Wednesday evening a large, influential, and enthusiastic meeting assembled in St. James' Hall, Regent Circus, to celebrate the Bicentenary. The meeting was presided over by John Remington Mills, Esq., M.P. After an effective address by the Chairman, three resolutions, which had been prepared by the Committee, were submitted by several speakers for the adoption of the meeting. As these resolutions convey in a condensed form the history and objects, the pith and principles of the Bicentenary Commemorations, they are given here, *in extenso*, as they were carried by that great Meeting.

The first resolution was moved by George Hadfield, Esq., M.P., and seconded by R. W. Dale, M.A. of Birmingham :—

“That this meeting recalls with devout gratitude to God the memory of the 2,000 ejected Ministers and other sufferers of 1662, who, rather than surrender the claims of conscience and truth, submitted to ecclesiastical privation, social degradation, and temporal loss, but whose Christian heroism gave hallowed impulse to the interest of liberty, patriotism, and evangelical truth, and the influence of whose doings is intimately connected with the present position and future well-being of the human family.”

The second resolution was moved by Handel Cossham, Esq. of Bristol, and seconded by Rev. W. H. Parkinson, of Rochdale :—

“That this Meeting heartily rejoices in the fact that so much correct information, in connection with the stirring events of the seventeenth century, has been diffused through the medium of the press, the pulpit, and the platform; and, especially that the celebration of 1662, on Lord’s Day, August 24th, was characterised by enlightened earnestness and holy charity, and believes that the large amount which has been raised by both local and general subscriptions, and yet to be augmented, will, by God’s blessing, in its application, tend to the wider diffusion of the great distinctive principles of Evangelical Nonconformity in connection with the preaching of the everlasting Gospel, the support of aged and infirm pastors, the erection of new churches or chapels, the education of the people, and other modes of practical operation, and thus give increased vitality and efficiency to our manifold denominational organisations.”

The third resolution was moved by Rev. Andrew Reed, B.A., then of Preston, and seconded by Rev. Robert Vaughan, D.D. :—

“That taking into account the present position of Congregational Nonconformists, with the multiplied institutions which they have called into existence, and being informed that the lease of the property now held by the trustees of the Congregational Library will terminate in a few years, while the premises fail to supply those facilities for denominational action which are imperatively demanded, this meeting learns with great satisfaction that it is in contemplation to erect a large ‘Memorial Hall’ in the centre of the metropolis, which is to include a library, offices for our various religious and benevolent institutions, and such other provisions as may be deemed

expedient or needful ; and would earnestly solicit the co-operation of their friends throughout the kingdom, in the prosecution of an object involving the interests of the churches not only in London and its neighbourhood, but throughout the country, and which, when erected, will constitute a permanent memorial of events which have been so widely commemorated during the present year."

Thus the Bicentenary celebrations of the Congregational Union of England and Wales were brought to a fitting close. The interest and enthusiasm that were evoked—and that characterised all the meetings throughout the country—show that the hearts of our people were still loyal to the great principles for which our forefathers contended and suffered. In almost every Nonconformist pulpit throughout the British Empire the subject was introduced and proclaimed. The Headship of Christ—the sanctity of conscience—the ecclesiastical sufficiency of the Scriptures—the false teaching of some parts of the Book of Common Prayer—the self-sacrifice of the noble confessors—these were the subjects that were explained and illustrated in every conceivable form. Speeches and lectures innumerable were delivered ; public controversies were held ; the whole country rung with the voices of disputants and speakers ; and inquiry was awakened to an unprecedented extent, respecting the glorious principles and peculiarities of Nonconformists.

Dr. Vaughan in a review of the results of the Bicentenary Movement in 1862 made the following remarks : " This Congregationalism has always embraced the two sections of Baptists and Pædo-Baptists ; but in the great struggle on the side of religious liberty these two have been one, and on the whole we do not see that either should claim in this respect to take precedence of the other. In both connections there have been men of great enlightenment, and men who did not see so far as their brethren, and no thoughtful person will suppose that the virtues on either hand were without imperfections. But to those men it was given to constitute the advance guard in the conflict so long sustained in our history, in the cause of religious freedom. From the ground taken by Churchmen in their censures of the Bicentenary Commemoration, it could not fail to be a matter of regret to the author of this volume (" English Nonconformity ") that he could not describe the English Presbyterians as sympathising more than very partially with the advanced sentiments of the Congregationalists. Every one acquainted with the history, will know that the author has touched on the

shortcomings of that class and as lightly as possible, if the truth w

DEATHS OF

An unusual rate of mortality during the year. More than entered into rest. Of these, some in the full bloom of life ; some while four had been chairmen namely, Dr. Bennett, in 1840-41 Rev. John Reynolds in 1843-44 ; The Rev. Andrew Reed, D.D. preacher, and philanthropist—active to the American Church number of the departed to v Chairman of the Union so patho

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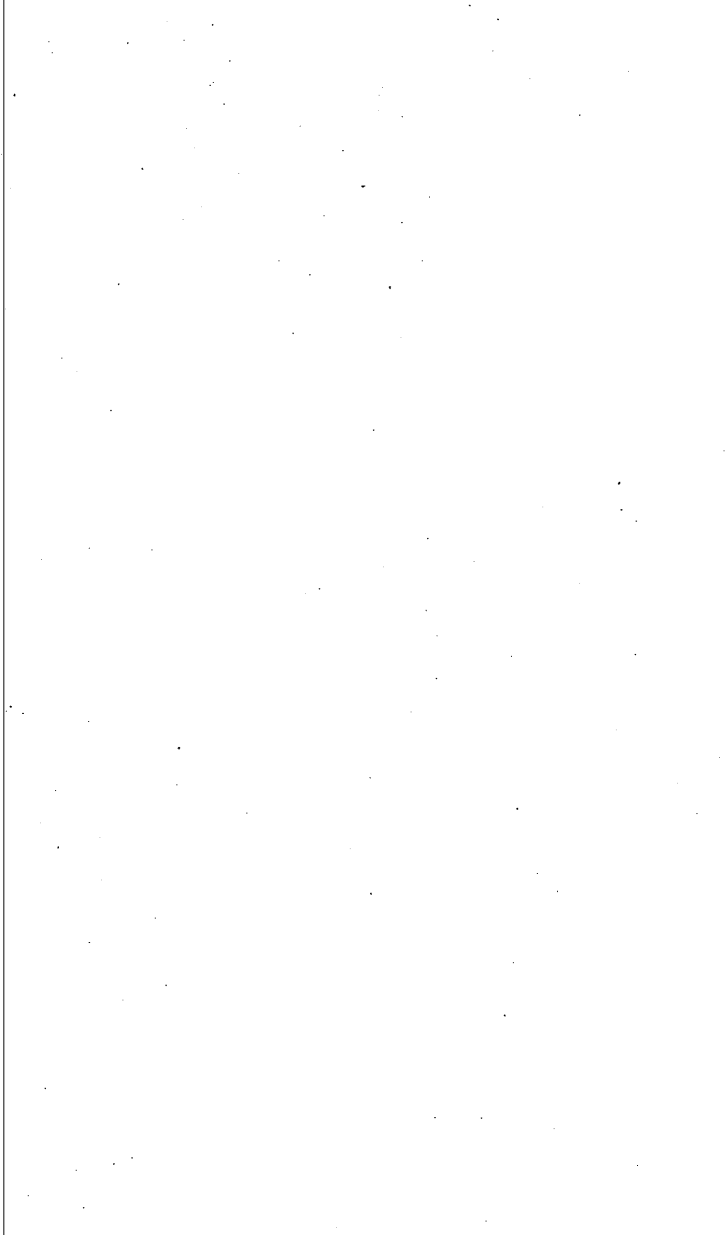
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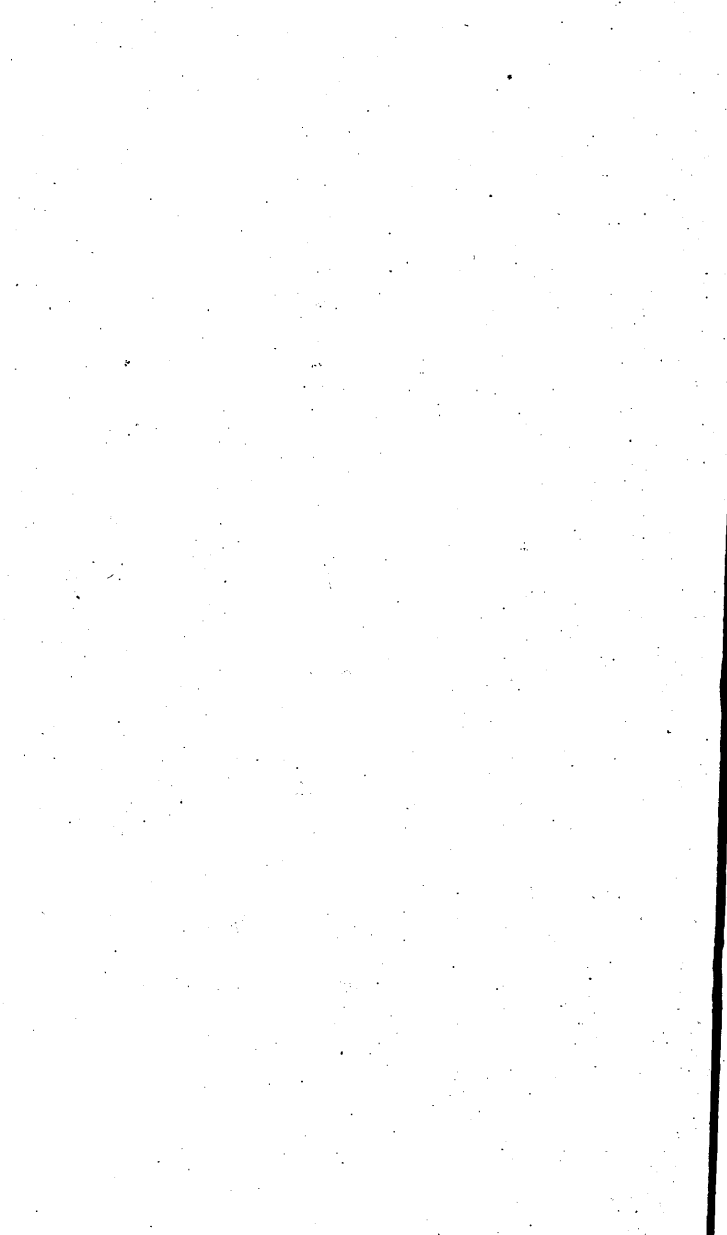
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